University of Alberta

DISCOURSES OF PASSIONATE TEACHING

By

Mary McGregor

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

Discourses of Passionate Teaching

Everyone who has spent time as a student in a classroom has experienced the impact of a teacher. "Marginal" teachers leave us with one story to tell and "passionate" teachers quite another story. This work is a collection of discourses by and about passionate teachers. What is it that keeps the passion in teaching alive?

The identity of passionate teachers dwells deep within the layers of their lived experiences. It is through knowing their stories that some understanding of their developing passion is found. To that end, this work shares multiple discourses involving the stories of six passionate teachers and the narrator.

Ted Aoki's three levels of discourse are employed as a means of layering our knowledge of participant teachers and the narrator. The first level of discourse is story telling about each lived experience. The stories are told through conversations stimulated by quotations from literature, a Dr. Seuss picture book, a collage of newspaper clippings about education, and participant selected personal photographs. The second level of discourse is each teacher's response to his or her storied experiences. Participants were asked to find evidence of their passion in the script of their own words. The third level of discourse is the voice of the narrator who re-tells their stories of passionate teaching.

The tools of the third telling are found in the theories of representation, post-modern theory, discourse theory and psychoanalysis, and in an understanding of objectivity, memory, signifiers, boundaries and privilege.

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Aunt Muriel, a model of compassion and the mentor of my life, was laid to rest on the day this dissertation was defended. She was and is an inspiration to me.

It has been my privilege to work with dedicated, accomplished and com/passionate teachers at University of Alberta. My thanks to Ted Aoki, David Smith, Jean Clandinin, jan jagodzinski, David Blades and Ingrid Johnston for their professional guidance and the exciting journey to now.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Passion is the energy, born of lived experiences,
both pleasurable and painful, that fuels desire.
(Mary)

Behind the Narrative is a Reason

This narrative is much more than the establishment of a topic and a series of questions - it is a mission that I feel compelled to play out. Teachers and teaching contributed to my personal sense of failure, and teachers and teaching provided, and continue to provide me, with a path to success and happiness. I am very aware of the potential that teachers possess to affect the lives of children both very positively and, unfortunately, very negatively as well. It is a blessing to me that I am privileged among people and that I am now a teacher and I carry with me an understanding of the power of my calling to do good for children. As a principal, I see my mandated role as advocate for children to include celebrating and supporting good teachers who are passionate in their teaching. Watchfulness as an administrator also means dealing with teaching that is not good and is without passion. There is no greater joy as a principal than the celebration of good teaching. There is no task more daunting than dealing with teaching that is not good. The road to improvement or dismissal of a "marginal teacher" is painful for administrators, teachers, children, and their families. This is particularly so if the passion is gone. Supporting a teacher who needs assistance to improve his or her classroom management skills, for example, can be a rewarding experience for all. On the other hand, working with a teacher who has lost the passion for teaching, or who has never had the passion, is cause for grief.

The most pressing issue for me as an administrator has been the identification, evaluation, and ultimate moral, ethical, legal, social, and emotional issues connected to the "marginal teacher." At first, I thought I might examine questions about "good teaching" and "not good teaching," in the hope that I could isolate problems and solutions to those problems. I soon realized that, for me, defining good teaching was about the presence or absence of passion.

I have come to the conclusion that remediation is not the answer to the marginal teacher concern. Instead, I am looking for the sources that support or obstruct the kindled passion that so many teachers possess at the beginning of their careers. My research study explores the question: What is it that keeps the passion in teaching alive?

Defining Passionate Teaching/Teacher

What is passionate teaching and how can a passionate teacher be defined? Hargreaves says, "passion, desire and other intense emotions have always been central to teaching" (1995, p. 26). This emotional element is often underplayed by research and by teacher training programs.

In the midst of a teacher's routine timed lessons, rigorous lesson planning, and accountability through measured testing lives the emotional connection to teaching. When I ask a new applicant, "What brings you to teaching?" I never hear the routine and structure as the response. Instead, I can count on their love of children, desire to help and support, interest in a topic or field of study, enjoyment of relationships with people, and commitment to learning. I call this emotional connection "passion."

The word "passion" is chosen for its intensity and connection to the commitment that is present in good teachers and good teaching. Beyond enthusiasm and commitment,

to be passionate means to suspend reason in favour of emotion. The term "passion" originally referred to the suffering that Jesus experienced between the last supper with his disciples and his destiny on the cross (Webster's, 1986, p. 1651). Over the past centuries the term "passion" has come to denote the importance of emotion. Pope writes, "The ruling passion, be it what it will, The ruling passion conquers reason still" (Bateson, 1951, p. 103). At the extreme, this means the loss of control of reason in the space between ecstasy and pain, good and evil, love and hate. This research seeks to understand the actions, events, and stories that evoke the passionate response of teachers towards teaching.

The broad journey into understanding the meaning of passion calls for recognition of both Western and Eastern contexts where history has provided ongoing reflection on the representation of passion through dialogue regarding the place and power of desire, love, and compassion.

In a novice comparison of Western and Eastern thinking through Freud and Lacan and Buddhism with regard to the role of desire, there are some differences and similarities. Freud and Lacan focus much discussion on the concept of lacking and the desire to remediate the lacking (Lacan, 1998). Passion is the energy, born of lived experiences, both pleasurable and painful, that fuels desire. If we look at the Buddhist perspective, the focus is on the attainment of emptiness is driven by a desire for clear thinking, compassionate living, with the ultimate goal of reaching Nirvana through lived experience and meditation (MacPherson, 1996). MacPherson explains in *The Adulthood of Buddhahood*,

> All products are impermanent . . . all contaminated things are suffering . . . all phenomena are empty and selfless . . . and nirvana is peace (Gyatso Tenzin,

> 1985). These four are related in that the impermanence of existing things is given yet our minds are driven by desirous craving to try to make them permanent. Our ignorance of and resistance to this natural law of change creates suffering from which relief is found only by the realization of the lack of inherent identity - emptiness - of self and phenomena.
>
> All Bodhiattva Vehicles acknowledge compassion as the highest ethic of humanity, and is in dependence upon that ethic that the perfectibility of the human form and consciousness is posited as possible. In the Secret Mantra form of the Bodhiattva Vehicle, the attainment of that perfection is considered possible in a single lifetime through the cultivation of a more subtle consciousness with which to apprehend emptiness. (pp. 459, 460)

Western thinking sees a space, a lacking that needs to be filled through desire, whereas Eastern, Buddhist thinking sees a too full place that needs to be emptied through desire to allow the conscious actions and meditations that seek out wisdom. In both cases, passion provides the energy to work the desire to an end.

Love, passion, and compassion are linked. Leggo (2000) observes in defining love that when the components are separated the understanding of love is lost. At the same time, knowing the parts contributes to understanding the whole. Leggo (2000) defines the parts of love as gamma (the law), pneuma (the spirit), and eros (the body). The interdependency of the components of love creates a complex phenomenon that clings to compassionate human relationships. It might be speculated that community allows for the laws of love, while relationship allows for the spiritual, and voice for the power that satisfies eros. In all, love satisfies a need for completion with the energy that passion provides.

Like love, the meaning of compassion could be lost in the dissection that seeks to clarify. However, the whole can only be felt through an understanding of the parts. Compassion, being with passion, with pain and suffering, with emotion, is a source of energy, determination, kindness, and security. It is accessed through knowing and

sympathizing with the suffering and pain of others. Compassion is knowing and understanding that interdependence is a fundamental law of nature. Compassion is a feeling of responsibility for others, a unity through cooperation, sisterhood, and brotherhood and a wish for other human beings to be free from suffering (H.H. The Dalai Lama, 1998).

> Real compassion comes from seeing the other's suffering. You feel a sense of responsibility, and you want to do something for him or her. There are three types of compassion. The first is a spontaneous wish for other sentient beings to be free of suffering . . . The second is not just a wish for their well-being, but a real sense of responsibility, a commitment to relieve their suffering . . . The third type of compassion is reinforced by the wisdom that although all sentient beings have interdependent natures and no inherent existence, they still grasp at the existence of inherent nature. (H.H. The Dalai Lama, 1996, p.60)

Our desire is to be happy and to overcome suffering, to understand and support interdependence, to understand that suffering or happiness is related with others, and to practice tolerance, forgiveness, and patience as the antidotes to anger. Compassion is "a precious source of inner strength, happiness, and future success" (H.H. The Dalai Lama, 1996, p. 65).

Passion, drawn from pati to suffer, and associated with strong emotional response, is the power behind desire, the power that pushes desire and gives it direction. There is a light and a dark side to the discourse of passion as we look behind the archaic meanings, associations, and modern uses of the word. This driving and emotional force that pushes desire is capable of culminating in the Buddhist ideal compassionate living experiences of loving and caring. It can also call up anger, hatred, competition, and all manner of power and greed associated with desire as a negative force and the sole source of human suffering (MacPherson, 1997).

Another dimension to defining passion is the relationship that each person living a passion brings to it. Passion is a signifier that is connected to the lived experience of each of the participants in this study. As such, a multiplicity of understanding is

generated by the prior knowledge of all who see themselves or who are seen as passionate. Because the signifier passion is dynamic, it will be defined and redefined with each narrative contribution and with each reading.

Passion as an emotion is further defined through an understanding of the role of desire to teachers and teaching. Hargreaves (1995) quotes Nias (1989) when he says, ". . . desires among particularly creative teachers are for fulfillment, intense achievement, senses of break through, closeness to fellow humans, even love for them" (p. 21). Hargreaves goes on to say,

> Without desire, teaching becomes arid and empty. It loses its meaning. Understanding the emotional life of teachers, their feelings for and in their work, and attending to this emotional life in ways that positively cultivate it and avoid negatively damaging it should be absolutely central to teacher development efforts. (p. 21)

What is it that evokes passion in teaching and what might cause it to evaporate? Through knowing those who are passionate teachers, possibilities might be brought to light. There is incredible significance to sharing the stories of teachers who develop and maintain the emotional attachment that is known as passionate teaching. Teaching skills can be taught through well developed teacher training programs. However, the development and maintenance of "purpose, passion, and desire" (Hargreaves, 1995, p. 9) are complex and multi-faceted and are recognized through the stories told by passionate teachers and through watchful listening to those stories.

Chapter 2: A Personal Perspective

I am a representation of what I think I should be,
based on my personal autobiographical history and
the context of my current living experiences. (Mary)

An Administrator's Lived Experience (Lost Passion)

My lived experience of an administrator attempting to cope with lost passion is expressed in two stories. The first story is my attempt to wrestle inadequately with the chronological events of my experience. The second story is my retelling of the same story after some reflection.

Lindsay left my office and I felt cold and numb for a few moments. I knew that her story was true before I spoke to another soul. I felt a monumental wave of failure. How could I let this happen in the school I claim as my own? I knew, through the rumour mill, that Ben was capable of emotional cruelty, but I had hoped that fair treatment, positive reinforcement, recognition, and support would motivate him to do the right thing. Apparently I was wrong. His treatment of this young junior high student was uncalled for, unfair, and abusive.

I remember a time when enthusiasm prevailed. We were all young teachers making our mark in the District. Ben was one of the best. His programs were excellent and students loved him. Wherever student activities were happening, Ben could be found supporting and enriching the activities. He was skilled in his field and enthusiastic in his creative program delivery. So what went wrong?

The process - of course I will have to interview witnesses to determine the truths of the situation. Ben will need to be confronted and I need to decide whether my approach is to document for recommended termination or to counsel for improvement. Or, perhaps that decision is not mine to make, maybe Ben will make that decision. He can be aggressive and I wonder how I will handle his denial and accusations of unfair treatment in this situation.

Interview after interview confirm that the events related by Lindsay were a reality. Her wounded pride, her sense of failure, her fear and anger were very much warranted according to all who saw and heard the episode. Unprofessional, abusive, unkind, unthinking are words that describe Ben's words and actions.

I can feel the anger welling in me as I approach Ben's classroom. "Ben, I need to see you in my office right away. Ray will watch your class." As we walk towards my office I feel the insecurity of the unsown. I invite him to sit down, I close the door, I sit down myself, and hold my breath for a few seconds. As I explain the concern I can feel

the energy in the room change. He is like a trapped animal, deciding whether to run or to attack. He chooses both. He opens the door and rails at me about believing lies and declares that our conversation is over, that he will call ATA and that my career as a worthless administrator is over. I sit quietly until he leaves and then I begin to document for the inevitable.

A year later, the situation has not been concluded and I am left to question how is it that some teachers remain passionate in their teaching throughout their careers and some shine for a while then grow weary or angry. How can we avoid the dysfunctional long term teacher? Could I have done anything to keep Ben from doing what he did? Or was Ben solely responsible for his own inappropriate choices?

Caught in a Cover Story

It is interesting to me that I had such difficulty writing the story of dealing with the "marginal teacher." I started the story on many occasions and was unable to create a rendition that captured the essence of the situation. In fact, the story of the teacher who transgressed professionalism in the classroom is less important than the impact that transgression had on the secondary characters. I created a hero, myself, and an anti-hero, the teacher, and in doing so, I created the "cover story" that was only exposed to me through the thoughtful and critical questions of my research colleagues.

The chronological story is of a teacher who, for many years, appeared to be well adjusted in his professionalism and enthusiastic in his support of students. Over time, he changed and repeatedly did and said inappropriate and hurtful things to students in his classroom. Again, over several years, he was transferred, admonished, and suspended from duties for these professional transgressions. The story here, however, begins with me, my motives, my methods, my personal dilemmas, and my sense of failure in dealing with this man and his problems in my school.

I have always viewed myself as a caring person who placed the well being of my students and teachers in high regard. So, you may well imagine my wish to repress the

notion that my motives, in disciplining a teacher and potentially contributing to the demise of his career, may have been less than pure. As you read my cover story, you are presented with the teacher who was willing to hurt a student and unwilling to accept responsibility for that action. This is, of course, an observation in the chronological story from one point of view. The question is - what is the point of view? At the time, I thought it was my point of view. In fact, however, it was the point of view I adopted from the experiences of other people with this teacher. When listening to a rumour, one must always consider the source and I thought I had considered the source. I feel the need to redeem myself in advance by saying that it is a recorded fact that students were hurt and therefore, as I go through this reflective process of uncovering my motives, one motive was pure: the motive to protect children. However, before I go about seeking sainthood, I have recognized that other motives were not quite so pure.

First of all, I did not like the teacher in question. I felt uneasy in his presence from the beginning. He was able to poke at the soft underbelly of my fragility as an administrator. He taunted me with a critical eye and comments that clearly placed my femaleness at the bottom of the food chain in his view. He did not respect my approach, my decisions, my plans, and my recommendations. At every opportunity, he subjected my work as the school administrator to critical red herrings that took the discussion far away from my intended goals of teacher professional development and shared visioning for children and achievement. There is a piece of me that made sport of catching him at being unprofessional.

Secondly, my senior administrator and I were very aware of a previous situation where the teacher in question upset an entire community with inappropriate antics that caused a number of students to question their worthiness as people. Furthermore, he was tricky enough to make it very difficult to catch him in the act and he gloated at his success in making us look foolish in our feeble attempts to make him responsible. He too was engaged in the game of cat and mouse and I think we were the mouse. I don't like losing, and, once again, the opportunity to win played a not-so-noble part in my motivation.

Thirdly, even Trustees were alert to this man's antics and they wished regularly for a knight in shining armour to rescue the system from him. Enter the knight in shining

armour! I don't suppose it hurt my career any by being responsible for making this teacher's stay in the system uncomfortable, if not terminated.

So, I have said it out loud. I am a would-be hero while the teacher is seen as the anti-hero. The "right thing to do" is in serious question if one looks at the motivation for my actions as I have aired them here. However, it is also true that this teacher hurt numerous students and in spite of attempts on my part to engage him in professional development or counselling, he chose to continue on a path of professional self destruction, while I, a willing partner in his self destruction, waited for the mistake that would terminate his tenure as a teacher.

My methods were beyond reproach and I think from time to time I was sincere in my attempt to help this man. He had input into his teaching assignment, opportunity to participate in decision making in the school, and opportunities for professional development to help him in his areas of need. I counselled him to seek wellness for himself and his family and provided him with the opportunity to follow that through. I worked hard at seeking his finer qualities, the qualities he had once been known for, and I reinforced those qualities personally and publicly as the year progressed.

By the time the trigger situation occurred, I was already facing the dilemma of my motives. I was calling upon myself to make a judgment that would impact forever this man's career and self concept. On the one hand, I needed to be vigilant for the well being of students. Yet, I needed to be vigilant on behalf of a veteran teacher. Were his teaching problems personal or professional problems? Could the problems be fixed? What was his motivation? What was his need? What was the need of the children? What was my need? Was it not the role of the principal to ensure that only qualified competent staff were on the job? Did he not show his lack of competence in his repeated inappropriate treatment of children? Did I do enough? What else should I have done? By the time we spoke about the incident, there was a wall between us, my need to ensure the well being of children and seemingly his wish for self-destruction. This story lacks the point of view of his students, and I must say, in summary, that they either loved him or hated him; nothing in between.

Who Am I?

"Every text that is created is a self-statement, a bit of autobiography, a statement that carries an individual signature" (Smith, 1994, p. 286). I am constructed from multiple points of view. I am the mother of two teenaged girls, the wife of a shop teacher, the administrator of a middle school, a trustee, a teacher of special needs children, a sister of a lost soul, a daughter of an alcoholic home, and a student of education. I consider myself to be one of a kind, and yet the antecedent of who I am rests

in the thoughts and being of others (Berger, 1977). When I think of my own intellectual work as I study with different people, I see the influence that each has shared with me. Daio Sawada brought thinking about discourses; Ted Aoki brought layered understandings and the spaces between. David Blades brought questioning, "Why is it like that" and "How else could it be?" David Smith brought the context of the global environment and the impact of wisdom or lack of it. Jean Clandinin brought the significance of narrative, the story, the phenomenon as a whole experience containing the connections of past, present, and future. jan jagodzinski brought a deeper understanding through knowledge about representation and the relationship of self with self and with other. Ingrid Johnston brings quiet confidence and a sense of the connections between all of the antecedents and the work that I am trying to accomplish.

So who is Mary McGregor and her work on "keeping the passion alive in teaching?" Clearly I am one of a kind. My intellectual work in support of teachers and children comes from the passion within me. However, to say that I am an original would be to deny the many influences of those who have shared my lived experiences in learning. I am a representation of what I think I should be, based on my personal autobiographical history and the context of my current living experiences as mother, wife, woman, principal, teacher, sister, and student in conjunction with the joint representations of others in my intellectual journey. Like a Van Gogh painting, the strokes of the brush, or in this case my pen, create a picture of what lies within the heart and mind. The picture will be subject to the understandings of the many contextually confined audiences over time.

I challenge myself to answer the question "what is it that keeps the passion alive in my teaching?" through the telling of a lived experience. "Journalizing lived experiences . . . is . . . the writing of experiences that touch our being" (Aoki, 1992, p. 30). What follows is an example of a telling and retelling that yields understanding of an answer to this question.

I really don't want to sleep, although there is something peaceful about this large soft bed. Snuggled beneath the quilted clouds, and embroidered cushions, I contemplate the happenings of the moment. The door is closed, yet, I can hear the muffled voices from the kitchen beyond. The kettle is boiling and the cups and saucers clink together. There is a little cup and saucer that is mine and later I will have my own tea with Nanny. The room smells different than anywhere else I know. It smells of dust and powder, soap and medicine. It smells old but not unpleasant.

As I lie here, unable to sleep, I can feel the presence of others in the room. There is a window on the wall filled with the pictures of my wishes. If I look just hard enough and squint up my eyes a bit and if I listen very carefully, the noises from the kitchen leave me and I can hear the quiet words from the once still picture in the window to my heart. Nanny says I am a good girl. Her voice is shaky, kind, and warm. Others stop to visit me for just a moment or two - Grandma, Aunty Miriam, Grandpa, Johnny and Graham. There are faces that I do not know. They scare me just a little, but I won't think about that just now.

This is a vivid memory that haunts me from time to time. It came to mind when I was asked to pursue the question "What keeps the passion alive" in teaching for me. I was interested that the first memory to pop into my head was nothing to do with the classroom.

My home life as a child was less than perfect. I am reminded of my regular state of being whenever I feel really afraid. My stomach tightens and my heart beats hard and quickly. It was like that for many years. This story is about a little girl snuggled in a favourite safe place - imagining. I recall that I was not sleeping while my visitors passed through the picture on the wall. I was able to conjure them up and I knew that. Many times I lay in that bed and visited with people I loved and occasionally with souls I did

not know. I was able to wall up my thoughts into compartments like kitchens and bedrooms in a house and live the experiences I chose to live. I was able to push out the experiences I didn't choose to live for the moment by closing the imaginary door.

How do I keep the passion in my teaching? Perhaps a little piece of the mystery lies in my capacity to imagine and my ability to compartmentalize feelings and realities. Teaching is a difficult job today - the press, the government, the accountability, the discontented voices of colleagues in the staff room. However, in the classroom, the safe place, there are other imaginations to share the experience of imagining. The classroom doesn't have to reside with the politics, the discontentment, and the expectations. I am free to create whatever world I would like.

This memory is positive; however, it is set in a traumatic place and I have chosen to recall my strength rather than my grief. There are rooms in my house where I keep the fear, the guilt and a collection of remembering that I choose to keep behind locked doors for now. In those stories the unsaid lives a life of its own and contains some of the drama of who I am. With the help of a therapist I have explored those rooms and I sometimes choose to allow, what Hoffman (1994) describes as the under-text of repression to remain the under-text. The very choice of stories, the text vs. the under-text that I chose to remember is a possible contribution to my ability to keep the passion in my teaching alive. For many reasons, some honourable and some for self preservation, I continue, in my life, to seek the positive. I choose, more often than not, to remember the benefits, even of sickening tales. Life's experiences either kill you or they make you strong. This autobiographical snap shot represents the writer's blended past and present context. The interpretation of the event calls for reading between the lines for all of us.

An attempt to understand one's own stories and the stories of others calls for questions to be asked. In what place is this story situated? This question asks for historical context. What boundaries have been drawn? This question asks for us to consider the discipline of thinking that is demanded. What would happen to our thinking if we reconstructed the story in a different place and within different boundaries or without boundaries at all? This question asks us to think outside the pre-existing framework. Whose point of view are we seeing? In other words, who has influenced the lens through which we look? Whose voice is heard? Now we are asked to examine who has been privileged in the telling of the story. This begs the question, who is not heard, who is not privileged? How would the story look from another point of view? Where are the politics of power? These questions ask us to consider the under-text that drives the assumptions about who we are. The under-text of identity lives behind the text of the story picture between the conversations of self and other. According to Bhabha (1990) signs of identity are present as much in the unsaid as in the said. Within this under-text, between the meanings of the text, lives evidence of the dynamics of the story teller.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In order to make sense of a collection of narratives,
it is first necessary to examine the possibilities for
understanding these stories of lived experiences.
(Mary)

The Research Participants

This research is qualitative and narrative in nature. A group of five experienced professional teachers who are considered, by themselves and by their colleagues, to be passionate in their practice, engaged in taped group conversations and individual interviews. All of the five participants are known to themselves and to the researcher as passionate teachers. For the purpose of selection, passionate teaching might look like strong teaching skills, caring for children, interest in subject matter and the world in general, enthusiasm, creativity, initiative, and personal valuing of the principles of democracy for both adults and children. Participants are male and female, and retired as well as practicing teachers who have taught for no less than ten years.

Ethics

Collaborative narrative research tugs at the guidelines of ethical practices that have been geared to the modern quantitative and qualitative research process. Narratives are unpredictable and shared experiences require ongoing negotiation according to Clandinin and Connelly (1988). It would not be possible to conclude for a participant the outcome or effect of the sharing of lived experiences, therefore preparing them for an ongoing outcome and providing the negotiated context where withdrawal is a real option for whole and partial stories of experience is essential. In the handling of the stories from an interpretative perspective, the researcher must not, as Clandinin and Connelly point out, "judge other practitioners . . . nor . . . attempt to implement particular . . . reforms"

(1988, p. 271). Participants must be cautioned "that readers may judge the record of participants' action in ways other than those we present" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988, p. 273). It is necessary to acknowledge for the participant the interpretive process that involves the prior knowledge of the researcher, the participant, and the reader.

During narrative research, it is the responsibility of the researcher to provide support to participants who are sharing in an exchange of information. Ongoing "informative comment," according to Clandinin and Connelly (1988), is essential to the collaborative research process, along with a declared willingness of the participants to see the "need to conceptualize and understand the problem of practical knowledge and be willing to read and evaluate . . . written comments." It is critical that the participants understand the purpose of the research and that care is taken in building the relationships in the collaborative context so that there is no sense of "ethical betrayal" when the ongoing interpretive process is implemented.

Of course, the issue of confidentiality is of great concern whenever research involves more than one participant in a collaborative project. All participants must understand the need to protect each other's confidentiality. However, the responsibility continues to rest with the researcher under the Code of Ethics for research to do no harm to participants, which includes keeping biographical identities confidential. The safeguard rests in the relationships of the group of participants and the researcher engaged in the collaborative process and in the shared understanding of all parties of the critical nature of confidence in research.

Timeline

The conversations and interviews took place over the period of a school year, scheduled for the months of October, January, and April. These months were selected because they are relatively uninterrupted periods of the school year and they were spaced so that the rhythm of the school year might be captured in the narratives of the participants. This research yielded 15 stories, with subsequent retellings, in a variety of school year contexts.

Process - The Three Tellings

The tellings of the participants' stories are based on Ted Aoki's (1998, p. 1) model "Narrating as Theming/Theming." The first story telling is designed to share experiences with my readers of passionate teachers. The Re-tellings as theming are reflective passages told by the same teacher when asked, "What, in this story, is revealed about how the passion in your teaching is created and kept?" From this question, and through a reflective process, each teacher examines his or her own stories for related themes. The Re-telling meta-narratively, is an opportunity to ask, "What made it possible for the narrative to be written in the way it was written?" or "Within what meta-narrative (the BIG STORY) was (this) narrative written?" (p. 2). This Re-writing is referred to as "writing between the lines" (p. 2).

Following each group session or first telling, an individual session with each of the participants was scheduled. A transcript of the participant's narrative was provided for reflection during this "re-telling as theming." The participants were asked to reflect on his or her passionate practice as a teacher and on the story that was shared with the

group. In this way, each of the five participants contributed their understanding of their own stories on six separate occasions.

Finally, the researcher connected signifiers in a "re-telling meta-narratively" examining the discourse of the two previous tellings. This researcher reflection took into consideration the nature of discourse practice, biography and autobiography, memory and representation.

Stimulating the Conversations

Within the boundaries that I set for this research, I chose several ways to stimulate conversation. The intent of the stimulation was to cause participants to think about themselves as people and as teachers. The difficulty was that the stimulation is not meant to confine their conversation, but to nurture it. In the case of a constructed interview, the facilitator attempts to impose questions to be answered. In doing so, the result is predetermined by the questions. The attempt here was to open thinking and not to restrict it. Ultimately, the stories that follow the stimulation should be triggered memories of "becoming" through the context of random, yet connected conversations.

Each group conversation started with stimulation through questioning, readings, newspaper collections, and photographs calling for the act of remembering of historical and recent stories of recollection.

Round One

In the first round, the stimulus for thinking was taken from *The Courage to Teach (1998)*. Parker Palmer shares the insecurity that many teachers feel about their ability to impact children through teaching. He questions the identity of self. Parker Palmer says,

> After three decades of trying to learn my craft, every class comes to this: my students and I, face to face, engaged in an ancient and exacting exchange called

> education. The techniques I have mastered do not disappear, but neither do they suffice. Face to face with my students, only one resource is at my immediate command: my identity, my self hood, my sense of this "I" who teaches – without which I have no sense of the "Thou" who learns. (p. 10)

He goes on to share his insecurity as self in the relationship with others, the students.

> The students in my first section were silent as monks. Despite my shameless pleading, I could not buy a response from them and I soon found myself sinking into one of my oldest phobias: I must be very boring to anaesthetize, so quickly, these young people who only moments earlier had been alive with hallway chatter. (p. 9)

The intent of these passages is to elicit thinking, without limiting topics, about the difficulty or ease that each participant finds in the teaching field. It asks them to consider their relationships with students and other professionals.

Round Two

Participants were asked to share pictures that represent important times, people, and places in their lives. The personal photograph is of particular value in understanding each participant. Snapshots, according to Barthes (1981), depict photographic signifiers as well as historical and sociological background pertinent to the storytellers. Some of the photographs are about the participants, some are by them, and others are about someone or something they love. The melding together of "narrator," the person telling the story about the photograph; "operator," the person who took the photograph; and "target," the place or person chosen as the subject of the photograph provide rich dialogue and ethnological knowledge. The translation of each photographed moment in time makes multiplicity of discourses possible (pp. 7-28). Recollections from the photography to the spoken word of the narrator as mediator reconcile,

> the two languages, one expressive, the other critical; and at the heart of this critical language, between several discourses, those of sociology, of semilogy and of psychoanalysis. (Barthes, 1981, p. 8)

The photograph provides a concrete link to the referent of the photograph and the related memory or the story teller (Barthes, 1981, p. 76).

Along with the pictures, the book, *Something to Remember Me By* (Bosak, 1999) was circulated. The pictures and the book were tangible ways to cause people to consider important memories for a variety of reasons. The stories that resulted contribute to our understanding of who the participants are.

Round Three

In this final set of conversations, the commentary in Dr. Seuss's *Hooray for Diffendoofer Day, (1998)* on creative and standardized learning was the stimulus for conversation about education in today's environment. In addition to Dr. Seuss, six months of local newspaper articles, taken from the *Edmonton Journal*, *St. Albert Gazette,* and *Morinville Gazette*, were randomly circulated. Samples of these articles can be found in the appendix. Both the book and the articles were cause to consider the political environment that teachers contend with on a daily basis.

Nature of Knowing

In order to make sense of a collection of narratives, it is first necessary to examine the possibilities for understanding these stories of lived experiences. The goal, in this case, was not to collect data, isolate consistencies, and make sweeping generalizations, but to listen to the contradictions and repetitions, the tensionalities found in the stories. Tensionality as I understand it describes the stress and friction that helps to create the dynamic under-text and multiple discourses associated with the narrative. Tension names the condition that exists between two original situations and tensionality describes the culminating energy in the space between. The goal is to better understand cooperatively

with the storytellers, the connections their stories may have to the passion in their teaching practice. Who we are, what we think and feel, might be demonstrated in our memoirs.

Each narration of experience was examined as one would examine a photo, a momentary representation of a life experience filtered through the eyes of the story teller, his or her past, present and future, the listener, his or her past, present and future and the circumstance of the story itself.

Chapter 4: Issues of Representation

We construct and reconstruct our understanding of
ourselves through the search for signs and signifiers
in the stories of others. (Mary)

Objectivity

Although objectivity is the elusive truth sought by researchers throughout time, narratives, or people's stories of lived experiences, do not pretend to offer objectivity. Instead, according to Jean Clandinin (1988), narratives are an expression of "personal practical knowledge." Mixed with knowledge and contextual setting, there is a blend of subjectivity that she calls "intersubjectivity" (p. 269). The potpourri of past, present, and future, all subjectively observed, stored, and explained by the story teller to the listener create a measure of possibility. An awareness of the dynamic possibilities of multiplicity is at the centre of the thinking around intersubjectivity. A story teller is a multiple self, perhaps incorporating wife/husband, mother/father, person, child, teacher, friend, colleague within a context of home, school or another place in time, telling a story to another multiple self in yet more times and places. Each person and each context contributes to the multiplicity of the subjectivity. This intersubjectivity does not create objectivity, but the illusion of objectivity. It represents objectivity.

How does intersubjectivity work? Each story told comes from a subjective perspective, and is heard from a subjective place. As the story is re-examined and discussed, more subjectivity appears. In this way, the lived experience is layered with subjective perspectives. Even the same story teller reflecting on his or her own story from a different time or place will yield yet another subjective view. Likewise the listener's subjective view is influenced moment by moment by internal and external

information. Objectivity, needing a safe place, seeks shelter from subjectivity. The layers of subjectivity weave together to form that shelter, where objectivity rests in the shade, beneath the lattice work. Has true objectivity been attained by this layering of subjectivity? Although it may seem that objectivity has been attained, because the burning light of subjectivity is no longer present in the shelter, there are spaces between the layers of the shelter and inevitably rays of light will find their way through, causing the objectivity to twist and turn in constant search for a more sheltered place away from the light.

All observations, all understandings are subject to a context which is perceived through a point of view of events, surroundings, senses, and thoughts. The disciplines of intersubjectivity are personal knowledge: history, goals, issues, memories, interpretations. Everything we know is merely a representation, a construction, or reconstruction based on a context and a point of view.

Homi Bhabha (1990) speaks of a place that he calls "the third space" as a way of describing the influences, for example, of two cultures on a third and new culture. The third culture finds its beginnings in the signifiers of the two original cultures and through a deconstruction and reconstruction, key elements of both founding cultures that are in harmony with the context of the moment emerge from this "space of negotiation." Likewise, the people who tell stories and the people who listen to stories each come to the text with a subjective understanding of history, goals, issues, memories, and interpretations. The third space, also known as the "metonymic" space between the cultures of two people allows for an emerging intersubjective understanding (pp. 209-211).

Calling on the works of Doug Aoki (1996), Bhabha (1994), and Heidegger (1944), who identify boundaries as starting places rather than limits, I see that each of the disciplines of intersubjectivity are observed to be connected by the spaces between them. The metonymic spaces describe the interdependent nature of the disciplines and linkage for the interchange or exchange of meaning of a reconstructed scenario (memory) leading to an understanding of a situation, issue, context, purpose, motivation that could be transferable to another situation.

Maxine Greene (1996) challenges the existence of objectivity through an analysis of representation. "From the postmodern perspective there is no single dimensional medium reflective of the 'facts' of the world, but a multiplicity of language games" (p. 208). Recognition that language is steeped in "point of view" opens formerly accepted "objective" conclusions to scrutiny. Now that we see conclusions based on point of view, Greene goes on to say, "voices of the long disqualified, the long silenced are being attended to and, wherever possible, decoded. There is an interest in hermeneutics or interpretation, making sense of transitions against the backgrounds of lived experience and location in the world" (p. 208). We construct and reconstruct our understanding of ourselves through the search for signs and signifiers in the stories of others. Whether or not the stories are true is not so much the issue as the way we respond to the point of view and order the signifiers to make sense of both the story and its impact on our own construction of self (p. 210). "The shaping of narratives, the telling of stories help persons to identify their moral purposes, to orient themselves to some vision of what they believe to be decent and good and right" (p. 312) .

Representation, according to Trinh T. Minh-ha (1992), is a "hybrid place" that defines identity as "a grafting of several cultures onto a single body - an acknowledgement of the heterogeneity of . . . cultural background" (p. 141).

It is the multiplicity of the individual that causes a point of view. It is acknowledgement that multiplicity exists in both story tellers and in the recipient of the stories that expands our understanding. Trinh T. Minh-ha also addresses the concern that people's narratives of lived experiences may be fictional.

> Every representation of truth involves elements of fiction, and the difference between so called documentary and fiction in their depiction of reality is a question of degrees of fictitiousness. The more one tries to clarify the line dividing the two, the deeper one gets entangled in the artifice of boundaries. (p. 145)

It is recognition of the role of representation, the absence of objectivity, and the presence of intersubjectivity that lends validity to a research method that calls for participants to share stories of lived experiences for the purpose of understanding. There are only six participants and myself who have shared our experiences of self and "others." As a result, the knowledge gained from examining our representations is not generalizable. The value of these stories and reflections lives in the possibilities for the participant readers to blend their personal stories with the experiences of the participants for an understanding of the potential. The potential is understood through the framework for understanding that recognizes the hegemony of social and personal structures.

Postmodernism

Postmodernism is signified by three questions according to David Blades (1999). What is it like? Why is it like that? How else could it be? The first question results in a description from a point of view, within a given context, of an event or of a way of being.

The second question raises many more questions than answers. How else could it be if it were somewhere else, if it were someone else, if it were in a different time or context, if it were observed or described by someone else, if it were described in some other way, if it were described for some other reason? This question causes the post-modern thinker to begin a deconstruction process that calls for pushing the boundaries and undoing the binaries that serve to enframe our thinking. The third question asks us to imagine otherness and tempts us to a reconstruction in a different form. The catch to this temptation is that in reconstructing, the very criteria used to make the new vision once again enframes the thinker with hindering ideologies that fly in the face of post-modern freedom of thinking. Peter Taubman (1999), for example, shared in a presentation his post-modern perspective that seemed to stop at describing the "what" and the "why," without pursuing the "how else," leaving us with a deconstruction and a fear of creating the wrong criteria for reconstruction. His perspective left an impact on my thinking. For me, there must be a criteria and because I desire hope, that perspective leans towards finding a better criteria towards building a better place, keeping in mind that the better place is taken from my point of view. It is also true of this research.

Thinking about thinking is the changing process of each of the historical paradigms. Historically, reason has been controlled by the social and economic context of its time. The power and position of God, church and state have designed the parameters for thinking by ordering privilege to God, to the bureaucracy of church, through economic and political status to state and then to individuals. Each paradigm has fixed its boundaries for the reflective process, the least restrictive being postmodernism. However, postmodernism lives within a modern framework of a social, political and

economic nature. In other words, thinking beyond the boundaries is a challenge when daily living appears within the same boundaries that one would like to think beyond.

Pushing the boundaries that confine our thinking is the challenge that the post-modern thinker faces. A barrier to this process is recognizing the politics of power and the power of the point of view. Privileging the point of view in the telling and retelling of an event, of a story, is a complex issue. Recognition that privilege has been given and that in doing so, other voices have been silenced in shaping the story, is a critical understanding that causes the post-modern questions to do their work. Deconstruction can only occur when the point of view of the construction being examined is clearly exposed.

Point of view is a choice made by the story teller, the photographer, the painter, and by the subject. Their choices of time, place, and perspective are guided by the political framework that surrounds them. The actual lens that each looks through is guided by that political framework.

Without the enframing of power driven boundaries, it is possible to view concepts from numerous points of view. Like Peter Taubman (1999), we are then faced with the question - What criteria will we use to frame the concepts? Possibilities are opened by post-modern thinking if we have the courage to set a new course. The new course will undoubtedly cause yet another enframing. However, the new boundaries may offer more possibilities than did the old ones.

Point of View

When the lens is engaged, choices have been made in the subject and the surrounding context (light, location, colours, smile, slant, etc.). The subject has decided

how he or she should appear to the camera for reasons of his or her own. The context of the photograph is found in understanding the motivation of the photographer, the space between the subject and the lens provides the surrounding hegemony of social, political, and economic boundaries. The resulting picture is read by an audience who bring to it their own reasons and restrictions. Interpretation of the photograph is filled with understanding and misunderstanding of the discourses that brought about the moment in time.

The lens is also subject to choices in the case of the written picture - the story. In the study of literature we speak of narrators as first person, third person, and omniscient. The narrator is the lens through which the reader sees the characters and the situation. Sometimes we learn about the thoughts or actions of the narrator and that helps us to navigate the meaning of the story. At the same time, we judge the story situation on the facts that are presented. So, like the picture, the story presents an understanding of the scenario as seen by another who may be all seeing and who may have a very limited perspective.

In the case of the following photograph, the light fell on three well-dressed and adoring children. The sadness of the economic, social, and emotional situation of abuse is silent. "Whom does the discourse serve?" The happy '50's family with "Father Knows Best" is important to the unseen parents who stand behind the photographer and direct his perspective. Behind them is a social order that demands a strong male bread winner for a dependent stay at home mother who is responsible for maintaining an orderly home and safe place for all. The father must wrestle with his social, emotional,

and economic worthiness. The photograph is proof for both of them of their adequacy within the enframing social context.

> The Photograph then becomes a bizarre medium, a new form of hallucination: false on the level of perception, true on the level of time: a temporal hallucination, so to speak, a modest, shared hallucination (on the one hand "it is not there," on the other "but it has indeed been"): a made image, chafed by reality. (Barthes, 1981, p. 115)

As Barthes suggests, the picture presents a perception that is not true, but a time that has been. The following story snap shot of prior knowledge presents quite a different view from that of the photograph.

The house is a small wartime story and a half, covered with chipped and cracked deadly Mannville siding. The driveway is half gravel and half weed, ending in a short nearly white picket fence. The lawn needs mowing and the flowers only occasionally

venture tall in the front garden. The best part is the back yard, where an awesome weeping willow touches the heavens and the ground from fence to fence to porch. This willow is my safe place, with a double trunk and a wonderful split just wide enough to hide a ten-year-old soul from all who would find her.

As I enter the house I am overwhelmed by the smell of house repairs. At the same time as the hostile paint and hops fumes enter my body, my stomach tightens and that sick shaky feeling stirs in me. Whenever Dad is working in the house, I can expect unpleasantness and demands. Sure enough, I can hear his harsh and vexed tone as he calls my name. Where is he anyway? I follow his voice to the top of the basement stairs, where the feel of fresh paint and spirits dampens the atmosphere. I hear him tell me to stop and look before I step down the stairs to answer his call. It is too late. I stand outside my body and watch as my pant cuff catches the stick in the paint can and my forward step hurls it in the air. It spins like a kaleidoscope of colour. For a moment I hear nothing, I just watch helplessly as the airborne spinning goes on for what seems like a very long time. The momentary pause in space is broken by the sudden crash of the paint can on the next four steps. It bounces off the wall at the end of the stairs and the noise of my father's yelling intrudes on the colourful scene.

I can't hear what he is saying because my blood is rushing through the vessels in my ears with a thumping rhythm as he rushes towards me. Instinctively I retreat down the back hallway and into the tiny bathroom by the back door. The back door is sealed shut with weather stripping designed to keep out the cold, but this time it keeps me in. With nowhere else to turn, I lock the bathroom door and stop to look at myself in the mirror. Usually I can expect a cuff on the back of the head or a shaking, but this time he has murder in his eyes.

I can hear my mother screaming in the background. "Don" she calls, "leave her alone - it was an accident." I imagine the scene in the kitchen as the sound of breaking glass accompanies his yelling back at her and, for a moment, his anger is directed at her pleading for me. I can hear the babies sobbing with fright and the inside of my legs turn cold as the heat of fear has passed over them. As a ten-year-old girl, I glance one last time in the mirror and my frightened mother looks back at me. My body shudders and my head feels like it might explode as I face up to the inevitability that I must open the door and face the raging disapproval and the ultimate consequences.

For the story snap shot, the lens focused on a representation that was developed as memory engaged through choices made in the remembering. The subject has decided how she and her family should appear to the audience. In the narrative picture, the teller and the listener arrive with prior knowledge unknown to each other and so the story develops a life of its own as a result of the merging of the two prior knowledges.

Walkerdine (1986) approaches the viewing of a film, or in this case the viewing of a story photograph, "as a dynamic intersection of viewers and viewed, a chain of signification in which a new sign is produced - and thus a point of production or creation in its own right" (p. 168). In the case of research, the first audience is a researcher who endeavours to interpret for an audience of unknown listeners the story that already has a life of its own. The result is understandings that are guided by the prior knowledge of each and the language of the story itself, producing a pastiche of knowings. Ultimately one sees not just one piece of understanding on just one occasion and in just one light but in a multiplicity of ways at shallow and deeper levels depending on the context of the viewing. On one occasion, it is enough to appreciate the big picture as the colour, texture, and shape combine with the surroundings. On another occasion a small piece stands out and causes the viewer to pause and think on its harmony or discord. Each participant in the event of creating and viewing the narrative comes complete with past, present, and future contexts and each context mediates the interpretation of the other. As well, each context is bound by artificial boundaries and transitions between those boundaries.

The narrative explained as a snap shot in words, although lacking in visual reflection of the object, carries some of the elements of the photograph as Hirsh (1997) refers to Barthes description when he says,

> Life is the presence of the object before the camera and the "carnal medium" of light which produces its image; death is the "having-been-there" of the object - the radical break, the finality introduced by the past tense. (p. 20)

The written word captures the thought, if not the vision, of the present moment within its context without regard for the intent of the speaker. The printed word captures

a representation that is interpreted by the present reader and will be interpreted by the future reader. Both present and future regard the thought that is now print surrounded in a new context. This is done while the reader searches through the past context of the thought. At once, the printed word, like the photograph, gives ongoing life to memory, yet it records what Hirsch (1997) refers to as the "having-been-there" (p. 20), of the thought that is now post memory representation.

There are two kinds of future readers that come to the now historical printed thought, those who have knowledge of the historical context and those who bring only the new context to the reading. Each inflicts what Hirsh (1997) calls a "post memory" (p. 22), on the message that is present in the print. Hirsh speaks of "post memory" as Henri Raczymow's "memoire Trouee" "memory shot through with holes" (pp. 22-23). He goes on to describe this phenomenon as "second-generation memory" (p. 23). The mixing of the thought that is present in the text along with the prior knowledge that the reader brings creates a post memory that understands only parts of the original representation and filters that information through the lens of his or her own experiences.

The picture, the painting, the story are representations of events that are told through a point of view. Here is the place where fiction and not fiction come together. Sometimes a fictional account of an event can be more descriptive of the situation than the chronological depiction. Often the chronology does not do justice to the events because of the point of view or the contextualization of the event. Possibilities lie somewhere between the points of view.

Memory

In order to recollect a memory from the past, it is necessary to board the time capsule of the present language, social and emotional context to slip through the metonymic space into the memory. The further into the past one travels, the more significant the journey. For example, when I am asked to remember something, I select from a massive bank of information. That selection could be random and it could be purposeful. The outcome is that from innumerable pieces of memory, one is selected to be plucked up by the present context and transported to the now.

When I was a child without language to express myself, I still had memory. I may have packed away some feeling, some sense of a moment in my childhood time. However, in order to picture that memory as an adult, I need to use language. The language I use to describe that moment in time comes from the many experiences between now and then, the metonymic space. Therefore, my interpretation, representation of my own moment in childhood time, is constructed in the future with future words and concepts. Ultimately it takes the present and the hopes for the future to capture the past. Once captured, the construction of the past becomes part of the present and the future. Memories are constructed as they are pulled from the past in layers that create "ever shifting nets of memories, and situations in which they are called forth" (Connelly as sited in Ben-Peretz, 1995, p. xvii). The memory will vary, depending on the reason and the person who motivates the calling forth. In this way, reflective memories are "elaborate, emotionally laden, intentional constructions" (Ben-Peretz, 1995, p. xvii).

An element of past, present, and future status of a memory is the human capacity for repressing unwelcome thoughts. Hoffman (1994) speaks of memory in her research

with Holocaust victims who struggle with the need to forget. She identifies the link in memory to conscience with those who accept their survival with guilt. They struggle with memory and repression of unhappy events. "Through its broken dialogue and dreamlike scenes, it sometimes reaches strata of almost mythic feeling: an intuition of deeper laws governing us and of guilt for disobeying them . . ." (1994, p. 2). This is said, of course, about the human experiences endured throughout and following the Holocaust. Yet, the statement speaks to us about our inner selves as we reflect, remember, and secret away chunks of undesirable memories.

Understanding

It would be easy to leap into an interpretive mode by reading the narrator's words and speculating about his or her meaning. However, analysis and interpretation are complex and require a process that lends confidence to our ways of knowing for the researcher, the audience, and the system.

Understanding the implications of the narrative demands a journey through the multiple layers of discourse that are present in any story. The deep meanings rest in a pastiche of contexts of autobiographical memories, historical and cultural under-texts, conscious and unconscious representations, and imposed disciplinary boundaries. At the heart of understanding lives is the ever present psychological knowing of who we are and what we desire. Further, it is the interplay of the prior knowledge and intent of the narrator and the audience that causes understanding to take place. "This inviting interplay 'empowers' the spectator to construct the story and build up narrative expectations for himself" (Ellsworth, 1997, p. 30). Neumann shares that the stories she hears "of others' lives are composed only partly of text; they are also composed of

silence for which no text can exist" (1997). The greatest challenge in comprehending the narrative is recognizing the unsaid, acknowledging the politics of power that permeate the choices of presence - what is said and more importantly what remains unsaid, who has voice and who does not.

When memory is uncomfortable, we repress it (Hoffman, 1994, p. 3). Where does the repression of the text, of the history, of the narrator, of the audience lie? The ultimate connection between the meaning and the psyche of the narrator is found in the language of the story. Language is our symbolic signifier of our intent and it is chosen both consciously and unconsciously (Lacan, 1998, pp. 103-104). Language both enables our thinking and confines it.

The process of meaning making requires the researcher to ask questions of the text. As a result of answering these questions, revelations about the multiple layers appear.

Signifiers

What are the key and master signifiers found in the symbolic language of the text? First it must be understood that words are symbols that stand in place of the meaning. What we call tree, for example, and what we picture or understand cannot be taken for granted. Mackey (1983, p. 258) says that "our words do not stand for their meanings; they stand in for them." For the purpose of analysis or interpretation, identification of key and master signifiers, a deconstructive reading is necessary. Mackey explains, "A deconstructive reading . . . will watch out for puns, alliterative sequences, phonemic coincidences, plural meanings, even typographical errors and lapsus calami" (p. 263).

The assumption is that there are no accidents of word (signifier) choice that disconnect the underlying meaning.

Discourse

What are the discourses of the text? Ted Aoki speaks of three discourses. The first discourse is a notion of "one's own self" (Hall, 1997, p. 49). The frame of reference is generated from a presumed commonality of "cultural codes" between and among the narrators and audiences that is played out through a search for identity in representing self as part of a universal theme. The second layer of discourse waives the assumptions about self as a given and allows drifting as a developing identity. "It is in an through various forms of narrative employment that our lives . . . our selves – attained meeting" (Kerby, 1991, p. 4). It is here, in the retelling that the narrator looks, "to create identity in the light of what might be" (Greene, 1995, p. 77). In the third discourse, also known as the third space, we join being with becoming.

> In the course of the search for roots, one discovers not only where one came from, one began to speak the language of that which is home in the genius sense, that other crucial moment which is the recovery of lost histories. The histories that have never been about ourselves that we could not learn in schools, that were not in any books, and that we had to recover. (Hall, 1997, p. 52)

In this deep concept of identity, we look beyond the boundaries of our preconceived historical context and address the tensionality of deconstructing the known.

Boundaries

What are the boundaries within the text? The boundaries are invisible definitions of time and place. The language of the post-modern window is hybridization, margins, borders, and the spaces between. The challenge is the recognition of those invisible borders that are built from cultural history and consist of binaries that define and confine

our thinking (Lacan, 1998, p. 105). The role of woman and man, the concept of self and other are examples of binaries that can exclude interdisciplinary thinking. If our historical order, for example, places woman in a particular role or place, then it is difficult to conceptualize other possibilities without deconstructing the historical under-text. Predetermined discipline and order create the boundaries. Each of the disciplines, although segregated one from the other is connected by the space between them. It is the metonymic spaces (Aoki, 1996, p. 3) that mediate the interdependent nature of the disciplines and provide the linkage for the interchange or exchange of meaning of a reconstructed scenario (memory) leading to an understanding of a situation, issue, context, purpose, or motivation that could be transferable to another situation.

Political Power

What political power is present in the text? Foucault (in Rabinow, 1984, p. 57) asks the question "whom does discourse serve?" Foucault does not criticize the discourse of structure and power, but he observes its place in generating knowledge. Power lives in the ideology that binds us to a history of thinking in a present context. Repression keeps us from venturing into new thinking territories for fear of offending the order. Power is enabled through the structure of the prevailing order. Within that order, truth is sought cloaked in the politics of the power structures. Awareness that the structures exist and the resulting impact on a story is found through questioning the disciplinary order in the under-text. The post-modern questions "why is it like that?" and "how else could it be?" need to be applied to the social, emotional context that surrounds the story. There must be awareness that what is said is challenged by what is not said. Once again, deconstruction of the existing structures is required to reveal possibilities.

Fiction or Non-Fiction

Is this a "true" story or a fictional representation of the truth? The autobiographical memoir is a script provided in the life moment being described. The researcher must determine what is honest and what the cover story is. Edel (1989, p. 17) states that Byron once wrote that "one lies more to one's self than to anyone else." Edel goes on to say that "the biographer needs to discover human self-deceptions (or defences, which they usually are). Such deceptions may become a covert life-myth out of which lies - and biographies - are fashioned." Kadar (1992, p. 5) says, "to write of any one's history is to order, to give form to disparate facts, in short, to fictionalize." She observes that the biographer searches through artefacts to find meaning so that he or she can create a text of the life experiences of the subject. Narrative artefacts are words and images created in participant stories. The biographer crafts the words from artefacts, whereas the narrative researcher uses the words crafted by the autobiographer to complete a picture of the lived experience. Edel (1989, p. 29) suggests that the researcher needs to view the stories as constructions that lend understanding to a theme, as opposed to a truth told by a lovable character. He continues, "A biographer must analyze his materials to discover certain keys to the deeper thoughts of his subject - keys . . . to the private mythology of the individual" (p. 29). It is not so much pure truth that is sought in the interpretation of a story, but observations of repeated life patterns as one would find in biography or fiction.

Stories are a way of sharing complex experiences with the researcher. Instead of reducing a phenomenon to essences, the narrative looks to expand the picture to include self and the contextual framework from which the story evolved. The added psychological information developed through the motivated and selective memory gives

the reader an opportunity to connect meanings rather than reduce them. Carter (1993) says,

> Stories become a way, in other words, of capturing the complexity, specificity, and interconnectedness of the phenomenon with which we deal and, thus, redresses the deficiencies of the traditional atomistic and positivistic approaches in which teaching was decomposed into discrete variables and indicators of effectiveness. (p. 6)

Subconscious

What subconscious under-text lives beneath the surface? All of the foregoing questions tempt the listener to consider the current foundation that our desires and fantasies are built upon. What are the possibilities for the meta-narrative that form the under-text of the story? What underlies the conscious and unconscious stories that reveal fantasy and desire? What are the discourses? What are the boundaries? Where is the politics of power? What is truth and fiction in narrative? What are the master signifiers? At the heart of Western thinking is the concept of Freudian psychoanalysis. Likewise, at the heart of narrative is language and the Lacanian interpretation of Freudian analysis that connects the symbols of language to conscious and subconscious thought. Valerie Walkerdine (1986, p. 192) speaks to this Freudian under-text. Power seems to be what is sought after by act or by fantasy. Power is associated with maleness by virtue of an historical discourse that places masculine at the centre. Physical size, strength, along with privilege and politics, over time contribute to the thinking that maleness is the power position. The emphasis on phallus and castration has to do with the wish for power and the fear of losing power. Femaleness has been the historical other that exists without the privilege of male power. As I understand Walkerdine's (1986) interpretation, envy of that dominance may be found in the fantasies of the female who, for example, escapes to

the romance novel, where loving is more to her imagination of shared experience (p. 195). Foucault (in Rabinow, 1984, p. 74) speaks of power as being surrounded by politics and the power that both men and woman seek is steeped in historical and present discourses that are filled with vested interests in the power remaining where it is or in the power changing shape and source. The key connection to language is found in Lacan's (1998, pp. 103-104) interpretation of phallus, not as an organ, but as a signifier that finds one lacking and one not. There lies a master signifier.

Chapter 5: Conversations

This is a picture of me becoming, or being,
or understanding or experiencing. (Mary).

Having charted a path of narration, reflection and retelling, there is a need to live the story along with the narrator. It is necessary to probe into the participants' and the researcher's past and future to develop knowings that will contribute to understandings. Clandinin and Connelly, (1990, p. 4) ask, "How far of a probe into the participant's past and future is far enough? Which community spheres should be probed and to what social depth should the inquiry proceed?" In order to address these questions, it is necessary to experience the hearing of narratives and to share in the conversations that elaborate these narratives. The narrative form of inquiry requires that the listener's voice does not forget the narrator's voice in making sense of the story picture. The observer must see not only what is there in the text, but what is not there.

UNDERSTANDING
what is said, but
what is overlooked,
what is secretly hidden and
what is absent.
(author unknown)

Experiencing the Research

Participants were asked to reflect on stories of their own teaching and learning with the current social trends in mind. Each participant shared personally and professionally significant lived experiences and their reflections on those experiences. Faced with a shoebox full of more than 30 tellings of multiple snap shots taken at different times and places, I saw my challenge was to select the pictures of most value and to order them in a way that would best represent each participant. Rather than

choosing a chronological approach, I grouped the tellings in three sections. The first tellings – the original stories, the second tellings – the reflections, and the third tellings - my retellings. The resulting narrative artworks created pictures of moments in time in the lives of seven passionate teachers, Patrick, Laura, Cheryl, Jane, Frank, Jo, and Mary, for the critical eye of the observer to consider.

The Album of Snapshots

While observing the discourses that follow, it must be remembered that the tellings or discourses are a collection of word/snapshots. Like a photograph album, some of the story-pictures are directly related and some randomly appear on the same page. While leafing through the album, it could be imagined that the story teller is prompting each story picture with the statement,

"This is a picture of me becoming, or being, or understanding, or experiencing . . ."

The story/pictures are arranged chronologically as they were told to the rhythm of a typical school cycle. The three rounds of discourses were captured at the beginning, middle, and end of a busy school year. Therefore, part of the context that is unseen, but possibly heard is the personal response to the timing. It is important to consider the underlying context changes as each participant responds first to the business of their day, then to the engineered stimulation of each round, and finally to the conversations that surrounded each picture. The third context is the external voice of this observer who makes connections beyond the participant's personal discourses and blends them into the tellings. Of course, the final context accompanies the reader who joins the album with contexts unknown to the subjects/objects of this study.

Chapter 6: Experiencing Patrick

When do you stop, when do you feel worthy enough? You feel worthy enough when you confront the issues of the past. (Patrick)

Patrick is in his late thirties, married to a teacher, and they have three children, two boys and one girl. The children are in primary and elementary school. Patrick has taught for more than 15 years and, for the most part, he has worked with behaviour-disordered students. He is currently a school administrator and working on his master's degree in school administration. He comes from a small town where he lived with his mother and his brother following the death of his father when he was just a young boy, eight years of age.

First Telling (Round 1)
(Responding to *The Courage to Teach*)

. . . experiencing insecurity about my choice.

I guess what I find interesting about Parker Palmer's comments is the experience he has at the beginning of the year. You go home on Sundays and you think, "I don't know what I'm doing. I don't think I know what this is all about." What he describes in the fall is interesting. I think you revisit that insecurity many times over in the course of a year on those really down days. You think, "Maybe there is something else I should do with your life," – well not this job.

. . . understanding the choice.

Why I'm teaching is such an interesting question. If I went back to my home town where I grew up in Pure County, people would say, "You – a teacher, an administrator!" And they would laugh at me because it certainly wasn't my destiny to go into education. I think we all have a passion to help people and there are two groups of people who go into education, some who focus on it for a very, very long time and other people who are the saviours and who are going to change things. I think we all have a bit of that. I guess I felt, when I was going through school, that there were very few people who understood my story, my life, what I was coming to every day in school I thought teachers were way up there with doctors and that they did what they did. Yet, I didn't have a lot of teachers who touched me when I was growing up.

I felt that I could be a listening ear for some of those kids who may have had a similar existence to mine. Teaching looked like something you could do. You could work with young people, it could be quite fun and it is somewhere you could probably make a difference. It certainly wasn't for the academic pursuit. That was not my idea when I went into education. It was the people thing, the helping profession.

We've come a long way since then, but I remember in Grade 5 my father had been in a very severe accident and for that year we had been on, you know, social services. I remember at the beginning of the year when you have to pay your book fees. We sort of sat in rows and we had to go up to the teacher's desk to pay. If you were one of these social services kids you had a voucher and you would go up to the front of the room to the teacher's desk. There was that feeling of walking to the front of the room with a voucher in your hand as opposed to being like everyone else who had money or a cheque in their hand. As I look back, I think there is something wrong with this.

I don't really know how I felt because our parents never really taught us to be embarrassed. I don't recall feeling ugly or isolated or out of it or anything like that, but I do remember thinking there's something wrong with this. I guess that would be one experience that I can remember. Many judgments were made and are made about kids and families and older brothers and I followed four older brothers. I was the youngest of the pack and I had four older brothers go before me. I think judgments are made on that kind of stuff and maybe related to families. We have to remember, back years ago that teachers were actually living in the community and they were much closer to more of the information. Now we all sort of pilot in and pilot out at the end of the day and come back to our communities where we live. I think there was a time when it was much more shared much more everybody's business. I don't think it was particularly harmful to me. I'm not carrying any huge grievances about it, but I guess a lot of different things like that made me think that there are people here who don't really understand a whole different group of people.

I'm not sure that I ever felt like school specifically didn't treat me well, but I think I grew up with the idea that life wasn't treating me well and so therefore somehow I'm going to make up for that. I think I saw education as a way, going into teaching, because teaching as I was growing up was viewed as a very stable, worthy, respected position. So, I wasn't going to make great shakes of money, I wasn't going to be hugely powerful like a lawyer or doctors who have these life or death situations, but I was going to have a very respectable position. I could become a teacher – I could do that. I didn't feel like life had treated me fairly and I was going to get some of that back, I was going to get treated equally. My kids would have an equal chance. Now what I realize as I go through life is that equality and inequality exists in all segments of society and that, what I am searching for isn't necessarily there anyway.

. . . experiencing teaching.

You just really wonder about the kids for whom school doesn't work. We often get feed back from the parents for whom it is working and we have kids come back and

see us who generally have had positive experiences in school. I always tell teachers, "You will have an impact whether it is positive or negative. You will impact the lives of those students in your classroom and in the hallway. You have the power of the decision to make it a positive or negative experience and I think that is what is so crucial, so important when working with kids."

The guy I saw today is one of those kids for whom school doesn't work. It is never perfect and I guess it never will be, and I guess my goal is to ensure that he feels that he has had a fair shake, that school has been fair to him. We may not be the best at what we do, but kids have to believe that there was some mutual trust there and that we tried and that we gave them what we could. I've done some research and my research is called, "This School Discipline, What Do We Really Do To Children?" I think very often what our discipline does to kids is further slam them and further put them in their place. It is not a learning experience – it becomes punishment. I'm trying very hard to help him make things work. I didn't have to discipline him. I listen to what he has to say. He is seventeen and he and his aunt were together. There was a blow up at his home and his aunt told me today on the phone that he sat and cried. He told her, "Nobody in that house tells me they love me." He said, "I haven't heard 'I love you' in I don't know how many years." He said, "To tell you the truth, my Dad loves the dog better than he does me," and I would believe that. He is coming to school and he is trying and he is trying not very hard some days. He is really rubbing people the wrong way. But a huge chunk of school and what we do only works if there are some other pieces in place, other supports. So, I hope when this young man leaves school, which he will, because I won't save him, he thinks he has had a fair shake, that somewhere along the line the world has treated him fairly. He probably won't think that at seventeen, he probably won't think that until he's thirty. I guess my goal would be that he would feel that he was treated fairly.

They are all worth it, from the very, very best shining star to the very bottom rung of the ladder, equally worthy of my attention. The best artist, the worst artist, they are all worthy. Reaching those ones builds relationship, I'm sure.

What I have had to come to accept is that his failure isn't my failure. He has made some choices. They all make some choices along the way. But at the end of the day I need to feel that I gave him some support, that I've provided him with some tools. Ultimately it is his choice. So, it is not my failure when he walks out the door. I guess that is what my goal is, to make them feel that they had a chance.

First Telling (Round 2)
(Responding to an important personal photograph)

. . . experiencing memories.

I've got two pictures, both of my Mom. There are a couple of different reasons why I chose them. One, I guess, is because I was standing in the hallway the other day at the high school looking at the incredible different kids that walked past. And I thought, you know at one point in time 15, 16, 17 years all of these kids were born to a woman who must have looked down at her eight pound seven ounce little baby and held a world of hope for them as all mothers do when they first see that new born. All very, very different circumstances of course, some secure, some insecure, some wed, some unwed, but I think every parent, when you first have a child, that's what you do, you look down on it and you hold out all the hope in the world for that child. So, I was looking at all these bodies in the hallway, mingling around and bumping each other. Maybe they were all held by some woman at some point in time in their hands and looked at with great hope. And I thought that was kind of an interesting observation.

I sort of pine for that agricultural, and I call it more simplistic, lifestyle. I think somewhere in my heart will always be this desire to go back to the roots of farming or agriculture. The people at work call me just a hopeless romantic because they tell me, the ladies who are farming, that it is not like that. It is not necessarily a slower pace of life. It is not necessarily any more wholesome. It is not all of those things that you dream it to be. It can be, but of course you can have all of those things living right here in the middle

of Sherwood Park as well. An agricultural, rural way of life is where I came from and I have really strong desires sometimes to go back to that, away from what I just figure is just way too busy. We live at too fast a pace and somewhere in my search with my own kids and my wife; we need to find a happy medium where we are not running at this break-neck pace. People will say that it is only this way while your kids are young. I don't think it has to be that way and somehow I think they could grow up being very secure, very all of those things I would like them to be without running 90 miles an hour. So, this sort of rural life appeals to me because I always think I'm going to find that slower pace if I lived out in the country. It wouldn't actually be that way because my kids would still play hockey and I'd be driving farther to take them to hockey. When I see my mother's picture, I think roots are just so incredibly important and I think it is mothers who nurture children, and who nurture boys in particular into becoming who they are. I think mothers play a huge role in the shaping of how their boys in particular become. Mothers play a real key role in that. That is why I chose these two pictures of my Mom. You know it is interesting, when you take a look at the pictures when you were young, and you take a snapshot of you now, then you think of all of the incredible things that have happened between those points in time. I look at this picture of my Mom just being incredibly young, a zest for life and then I look at all of the things that transposed [sic] in her life until she died, and I just think wow, life is really incredible when you think of it.

First Telling (Round 3)
(Responding to Dr. Seuss and the newspaper)

. . . experiencing teaching and learning.

I remember performance reading in that crazy play *The Grinch that Stole Christmas*. I was the dog. And then in Grade 5 I had to be the reindeer. I just remember they tied a bone around my head with fishing line and I had to go like this so I wouldn't choke to death. My kids still enjoy Dr. Seuss. My five-year-old daughter and eight-year-old son love him. Interesting when you talk about school because a couple of months ago I was asking my daughter about school and she said, "Well Dad, we're not learning anything." She said, "We just have fun all day." And I thought wow, if only that could stay. So then I said, "Well, tell me something in French." So then she rattled something off, and I'd ask her some questions and then I'd say, "Well, where did you learn that?" "Well, I think I learned that at school." But she said, "Honestly all we do is have fun all day long." I thought, wow, it would be nice if someone in Grade 12 was like that. But that was neat because to her it is just all fun, not learning anything, just having lots of fun. She doesn't complain, she thought it was great.

I think back to my very first year at the Academy and I was charged with teaching these boys. At that time the show *The Wonder Years* was on. I remember all of Kevin's experiences growing up and he always had that self-talk. So, I just started taping *The Wonder Years* and we would watch it and then we would sit down and discuss his relationship with his father, how he felt about girls, why the brother and sister didn't get along. We would discuss how he felt when he was rejected because he was a small guy and how he didn't get chosen for the football team. You know you always wonder if you

are making any kind of an impact. Well there was this one guy, Don Kid. He used to call me periodically to chat. He called me a few times at home and the last time I heard from him was about two years after he left The Academy. He said, "I still watch all of *The Wonder Years* reruns on TV." To me that is an example of doing what we are charged to do and obviously it made some kind of a difference and it wasn't taught out of a textbook. It obviously had the effect that I wanted it to have because there was something he remembered. I'm sure he remembered the conversations we had around that show. But I think that is kind of neat, it is a neat memory.

Last weekend I was asked to speak to the Grade 12s. They are allowed to choose who they want to pay tribute to them for graduation and they nominate and they vote and I was chosen to give them their tribute. So I thought for a long time about what I would speak to them about. I chose, and I'm sure you are all familiar with it, *All I Really Need to Know I learned in Kindergarten*. I chose that as the piece that I would reflect on with them. My personal belief is that with all these pressures we are feeling and in all of this media stuff, the message in Fulghum is still what we are trying to do in education, to teach them, which is to make the world a better place.

In my speech, I ask the class to consider, what have you really learned these past 12 years? Students think back to Kindergarten - remember how stress free the world seemed. A man named Robert Fulghum believes that all the important things you learned, you learned in kindergarten.

Fulghum challenges us to do things in life that will make us happy. In a nutshell he tells us to be kind to others, take care of ourselves, and live a balanced life. Your theme today, getting by with some help from your friends dovetails beautifully with what Fulgham says - remember to hold on and stick together. Pretty good advice I believe.

But as you leave school it is important for you to realize that you have not been doing all the learning. I must share some of the things you have taught me. You have taught me how to continue to see the world through the eyes of a 17 or 18-year-old. This keeps other teachers and me young at heart. You make me laugh. You have taught me a whole new vocabulary. You have taught me that as adults sometimes we need to reassess what we do and how we think. I have learned from you that young people today are determined to make a difference. I feel very comfortable growing old knowing that the future lies in the hands of young people like you.

I am honoured to be here at this podium addressing you today. Remember the important things in life - live, love, and laugh often and remember no matter how old you are, when you go out in the world, it is best to hold hands, and stick together. WE need to stick together as we journey through life.

Re-Telling as Theming (Round 1)
(Responding to *The Courage to Teach*)

. . . experiencing being helpful.

Well, looking at the stories that I have told, it is certainly what you get back from the kids that keeps the passion going. Addiction is too strong a word, but it is that constant interaction with kids and young people and seeing them go forward that keeps me going day after day after day. It is sifting through all the garbage and actually seeing the kid, the human being and being able to work with that and feeling that you are having some kind of an impact. This is truly what keeps the passion going.

I think the student who is high risk to leave school is probably the student that I aspire to help the most, because probably at one point in time I was the child who could have left school early very easily and gone and done something other than school. I don't think the system is very empathetic towards that kind of kid, or very supportive. I think most, or a lot of people want to just get rid of them, just suspend them until they go away, or they think, "I don't want them in my class," or "I don't really care where you put them, but they are not right for my program, so just do something with them." They are exhausting to work with. They are the same ones that I see in the smoke pit, the ones whose parents try to rescue them, and the ones for whom I make ten timetable changes in one semester to try to accommodate them. They are an exhausting group of people and yet I do think they need our support.

Interestingly, those types of students are often very intuitive and I think they can see somebody who truly wants to help them as opposed to somebody who is just going through the motions. So, I think they can see me as being a real person, sincere in my efforts. I think what I get out of that is the recognition that yes, I do want to work with them and I do want to help them. I think they are intuitive enough to see the sincerity, because they are pretty bright in their own way. It is recognition from that group of people, from that type of student. But they are not the only ones I aspire to work with. I think all students need our support, not just our at-risk learners, because if I was to just focus on at-risk learners, you know, that is a pretty narrow focus. It is important to me just seeing students' accomplishments. It matters that they are doing it, working hard, that they are getting something out of it, that they are young adults, that they are making the decisions that affect them. Sometimes they are confused and sometimes they are scared and I like to just sit down with them and say, "You know, it's all right." Also, I get feed back from parents and I think that keeps the passion in teaching. I sit down with a parent and say, "Your child has made some poor choices or some bad choices. Your child is not a bad kid. This is their school, their community. How are we going to work to repair what has been done?" So, as opposed to that strict disciplinarian that you need to be sometimes, if you are a facilitator or a helper, you get from parents this wonderful sense of relief of - I'm OK.

. . . experiencing worthiness.

I think I view this job as a calling. It is service; to me education is a service that we provide. Why do I want to serve? I'll be really, really honest about why one wants to serve. I think people who maybe are not really secure feel that they want to prove themselves worthy. So, I look at what I can do, and I can do this. I can serve - I can

make it better. I can make a difference. It is important to my sense of worth that I am recognized for what I do. I don't know where that ever stops. When do you suddenly feel that you are worthy enough? When can you stop serving, when have you proven yourself, that is the question. When do you suddenly say, "Yes I am good enough." I think that is where my desire to serve comes from, the desire to say yes I am worthy, I can do it.

. . . understanding the risk.

I believe it is the ones who are balanced that remain passionate. And I think that is the problem with administrators, we don't balance; we just go, so we are at risk, very much at risk. I believe if you look at somebody who really has found a way to balance . . There is a guy from Pure County, and I don't know what his name is, but he rides his bike every day. Every day I pass him on the highway. I see him, if I'm coming at the right time, and it doesn't matter if it's 30 below, he is driving his bike. So, he must really get something out of that and it seems to me he must have found some kind of balance in his life. But, what do I do with my down time? I manage both of my son's hockey teams. Well that is just more work managing people. I mean, it is just an extension of my day job. You know, making schedules and getting people places on time, and booking hotels and that kind of stuff, which is just more of what I do at school. So it is not providing any balance. But of course, there are a ton of things that work into that. There is a strong, strong desire on my part to be a better father than I had. That puts a person at risk of crashing and burning. If you just put all of your energies into being better or into proving yourself, you make yourself very much at risk. I have read some very interesting stories from *Simple Abundance for Men*. There are some stories there that are profoundly . . . you know, the Rabbi in New York who was just doing it all, but his own family was falling apart before he realized that something had to change. I think we put ourselves at risk. And what do we get out of it, I don't know. I spoke to one administrator recently and I asked him, how do you survive this job and he looked very profoundly at me and said, "I didn't survive." He said, "I lost my marriage, I lost lots of things. I didn't survive. I was a fool. I lost everything that I had that I respected," he said, "You know, I lost because I wasn't willing to recognize where I was at risk." Our passionate people are at risk. I think many of us start out very, very passionate, and I think you are very correct in wanting to identify what keeps those ones passionate when they are 45, when they are 50.

Another thing that keeps the passion alive in people is developing that ability to say no or knowing where you can draw the line. Otherwise some of us who are passionate can get walked all over because, for example, we are always going to take in those late assignments. We are going to stay extra time and help a kid, we are going to give up our lunch hours, and do all of those things and that is high risk for burn out. Somewhere you have to draw the line and say no. This is who I am, this is my teaching identity but I have all this other stuff in my life. Some of us who are passionate believe that you just have to keep doing and if you just keep doing you know its going to all work out in the end. It will pay off in the recognition. When do you stop, when do you feel worthy enough? You feel worthy enough when you confront the issues of the past. Then

you just suddenly say, its OK, I can stop pushing so hard. And maybe we just never completely deal with it. I'm looking for that time when the issues are dealt with, when they are done and now I can get on with it. It is a very complicated question, this passion in teaching and why we are there.

Re-Telling as Theming (Round 2)
(Discussing the response to an important personal photograph)

. . . experiencing parenting.

The essence of what we do with children, my children, depends on my ability to parent them. I listened yesterday to a radio program and it just said that we are so busy trying to give our kids experiences in life that we are not letting them live. We are so busy dashing them around and trying to make everything perfect and exposing them to every possible opportunity so that they can choose and they can be well rounded that we are not letting them live. We are jamming in three and four and five activities in one day and we think we are doing it all right, and maybe we are, but sometimes I wonder if we really are.

I was at church yesterday and the minister was saying that our number one reason for being there is not committee work, is not drawing new people in, it is not any of those things. The centre of that church is God and scripture and it made me think that the centre of teaching, the centre of education is teaching. When you strip everything else away we are hired to educate young people and of course we do that through committees, we do that through all these other things we do. When it is all stripped away, we are here to teach people's children and to keep them safe and all of the other things that we do that seem to distract us. I think that we have to make sure that our focus is always kids and teaching and really what our primary goal is.

I believe that a lot of people lose sight of what we are doing here and why we are here, all the way from school secretaries, school janitor, all the way up to school superintendent. Along the way, we sometimes will lose sight of why we are here and I think we can get misguided. I think I need to go back to that focal point always. I just think our children are our most important resource and that we need them. It is a reference point, but it is just so vitally important that we do a good job with young people. So you are really asking me why do I keep coming back to that? Why the passion? What drives me to keep coming back? And I think it is just a love of what I'm doing. Working with people, working with kids, helping them realize their potential, guiding them.

I think there is a real feeling of satisfaction that I have done my best and provided as much support and as much guidance as I possibly can and hopefully that makes them better equipped to go out and make some decisions, good decisions or bad decisions, but knowing that I have helped to provide a threshold of support and guidance to them. I would hope that in some part of those decision making processes they would be able to look back in school and say, "I remember so and so or so and so," not me necessarily, but

I remember such and such a teacher who would be disappointed in me, who would be proud of me, or I remember what they told me, I remember the lesson they gave and now I'm realizing that there is some truth to that. So whether they make good or bad decisions, we can't control. How they deal with them, that is where we have some . . . you know, impact. Parents come into my office, and I tell them, "You don't have a bad kid, he just did something really stupid, and we will get through it and life will go on and the sun will come up tomorrow morning and we'll go on and you'll go on, but we do need to deal with it."

It is important for me to leave my footprints somewhere, my mark. But I'm not so sure that I shouldn't be leaving my mark in my home first, and then be a little more concerned about the big world. I think it is important to leave my mark somewhere.

I have to tell you that I have enjoyed this, because I think everybody should be pushed to answer the question of where and why the passion.

Re-Telling as Theming (Round 3)
(Discussing the response to Dr. Seuss and the newspaper)

The passion in teaching remains in the "relationship," not the destination but in the journey. As teachers we touch lives. Curriculum, rules, preparing for the "real" world, etc. are secondary to that which we really do - touch lives.

As an educator I believe that schooling is a process - a verb - Education is the end result of the interaction. It goes both ways, "Everyone a learner, everyone a teacher." This statement is so incredibly true.

But isn't that what life is – the desire in all of us to connect to our past, other people, those we love, those who have hurt us. Education is a process to help "kids" begin to make that connection.

As a teacher it amazes me the profound effect my actions – not my knowledge, not my degree, not my brains – but the profound effect my actions can have on influencing others. But of course that is not all we do – we are charged with teaching curriculum and giving tests and recording superficial scores.

The passion for me remains in teaching when I can do all those things I am "hired" to do and still touch hearts, build relationships, and make connections. The passion remains because I can fight against all the "institutional" requirements of my job and not lose my human spirit.

The oyster in the shell is that we all have a human spirit. Strip away all of our differences and we have one thing in common – a human spirit.

Re-Telling Meta-Narratively (Round 1)
(Discussing the responses to The Courage to Teach)

. . . finding identity and the lived experience of teaching.

Patrick questions his ability, just as Palmer does. He begins to develop a discourse of his identity prior to teaching and as a teacher. He was a child very much in search of identity. He suffered the boundaries of identity imposed by the school and his community. He was constantly compared to his older brothers and felt judged as a social services recipient and ultimately he met that challenge by behaving in ways that did not look like success. He became the very student he is now so interested in helping, the student at risk of dropping out.

Fairness is a signifier in Patrick's search for identity. He mentions several times that he didn't feel that he was treated fairly and that he wanted fair and equitable treatment for himself and his own children. There is evidence that Patrick needed voice as a young man and that he sought a profession that might provide the necessary status from his perspective to give him voice and recognition. He says about his decision to become a teacher,

> I felt that I could be a listening ear for some of those kids who may have had a similar existence to mine . . . Teaching looked like something you could do. You could work with young people . . . you could probably make a difference.

Patrick chose to share a lived experience of working as a teacher with a student who appeared to be without family support and for whom the world and school did not offer a "fair shake." It is not mere coincidence that Patrick chose this experience to explain his teaching identity. The need for fair treatment for himself is clearly translated into his wish to help others find their way in school.

We are selective in recalling our memories and it is interesting that Patrick has selected the story of a boy who is at odds with his father and who feels the lack of loving from that father. Patrick suffered the loss of his father early in his own life and that would give him reason to hear a young boy's lack of fathering and to empathize with that loss. Patrick wrestles with his sense of responsibility to the young boy in his story. He hopes that the boy will feel supported and that he has had a fair shake. At the same time, Patrick concerns himself about the sense of failure that can be connected to the outcome that a student accomplishes. Patrick says, "His failure isn't my failure." Patrick repeats the statement as if to emphasize that he cannot be held responsible for decisions made by another. Yet, we are left with the sense that Patrick feels the failure of his student personally.

When Patrick interprets his own conversations, he finds that the passion is connected to relationships as opposed, for example, to a personal commitment to academics. He admits that he is most interested in the "high risk" student and he recognizes the intuitiveness of his high risk students and looks deep into them for their potential. He says, "I think they are intuitive enough to see the sincerity, because they are pretty bright in their own way." Recognition as a concerned partner in the education of his students is important to Patrick. He prides himself in his caring and his ability to reach students at risk and other students as well. And, he values the recognition afforded him by the students and by the parents of those students.

"I think I view this job as a calling." Patrick sees education as service for the greater good and he brings a spiritual sense to this understanding. At the same time, he questions why he spends as much time and energy on the job at the potential peril of his

home and family relationships. On the one hand, Patrick feels driven to do more for his own children and for his children at school. This creates within him tensionality as he ponders the need for balance in his life and in the lives of his collective children. The potential for what we often call "burn out" is of great concern to Patrick as he constantly measures his own energy against the needs of his teaching discourse and his family discourse. Fatherhood is a strong signifier present in the joy and tensionality that exists in each of Patrick's daily commitments.

Re-Telling Meta-Narratively (Round 2)
(Discussing the responses to an important personal photograph)

. . . experiencing memories.

The focus of this second set of conversations is a selected picture of an important time and place in Patrick's life. Patrick chose two pictures of his mother. Patrick's thoughts wander from the pictures as he thinks about all the teenagers he sees in his high school hallways and as he contemplates the role that mothers play in the lives of their children. At the same time, Patrick's thoughts travel back to a simpler time on the farm and within the arms of a safe and caring community. These thoughts are in direct conflict with Patrick's earlier school memories of being judged in the school and extended community by the boundaries of his family and their economic status. When Patrick thinks of the rural simpler times, it is a fantasy that he entertains. He is actually aware that he is entertaining a fantasy. In the telling, he refers to his secretaries who remind him that things are not what they were, or what he thinks they are in the rural areas. The pace there is busy, just as the pace in schools is busy.

Given the death of Patrick's father, it is no surprise that he sees mothers as significant players in the lives of children and particularly in the lives of boys. It is at this

point that he looks closely at the pictures of his mother and considers how young and full of life she was in her youth. He says, "and then I look at all the things that transposed in her life until she died, and I just think wow, life is really incredible when you think of it." Patrick's use of the word transposed is interesting in this context. I suppose he might have meant transpired; however, he said transposed. The meaning of transposed is to change position or order, to invert. In music it means to play another key, in math to transfer to the other side, changing plus to minus or minus to plus. In Patrick's life, his mother played the role of mother and father at the same time and judging from his comment on her youth in the picture, the transposition that made her both mother and father might have been an exhausting one. This is where I see a key signifier as father to Patrick. With his mother being both father and mother his role as father and or mother is built on the role model of his youth, but it leaves him wondering what a father is. Patrick lives in the metonymic world between the discourses of mothering and fathering.

Once again, Patrick questions the hurried pace of today's busy lives. He seeks to strip away what is not important in favour of finding and supporting what is important. He is searching for focus as a teacher, as a parent and as a spiritual human being.

> I was at church yesterday and the minister was saying that our number one reason for being there is not committee work, is not drawing new people in; it is not any of those things. The centre of that church is God and scripture and it made me think that the centre of teaching, the centre of education is teaching.

Patrick would like to leave his "footprint" somewhere. He continues to seek the meaning of being for himself and for others and he contemplates this through his multiple self and through the "others" that he encounters. A signifier here is life and death and subsequently the search for the meaning of life and some quest for inherent permanence.

Re-Telling Meta-Narratively (Round 3)
(Discussing the responses to Dr. Seuss and the newspaper)

. . . experiencing the partnership of teaching and learning.

Patrick admires his daughter's attitude about learning and wishes for all students to have that kind of zest and enjoyment in learning. He compares his attempts at making learning fun and meaningful for his own students with a story about watching *The Wonder Years* for the purpose of life centred discussion. Patrick feels that he is successful in making life lessons memorable and that the much needed recognition comes through the ongoing contact with a grateful student. The ultimate recognition for Patrick came in a request by the Grade 12s to speak at their graduation ceremonies. In that speech, Patrick addresses the students as his own and encourages them to be kind to each other and to remember the simple rules of living, loving, and caring. The speech is a testimony to his ongoing search for focus and balance in his own life and in the lives of all of his children.

In Patrick's final reflection he outlines the importance of relationship, interaction, and his desire to connect to his past, others, and the ones he loves. Another major signifier is relationship. Patrick seeks the relationship over the rules of curriculum and educational requirement. To him, it is the relationship that lives at the heart of his passion and recognition confirms that relationship is there.

Patrick recognizes a lacking within himself that causes him to passionately pursue the teaching of children. The lacking creates a passion within him to be compassionate. Patrick was raised without a father and he aspires to be a good father whatever that means to someone who has little experience at being fathered. He continues to look for completion through recognition that he has acquired the status of a good father to his own

children and also to the children he teaches. It would appear that Patrick's construction of himself as a passionate/compassionate teacher involves his relationship with his students and his own children, relationships that are experienced through love.

Patrick also speaks repeatedly about his need to create relationships and community among his biological children and school students. He fantasizes about a better time gone by when life was less complex and values were a larger part of daily living. He sought this through his move to the country and he promotes this sense of community through valuing student service projects and promoting a sense of interdependency amount his children and students. "Hold hands and look after each other," he quotes from Fulghum's work. hooks (1994, p. 131) says, "As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence." Patrick recognizes the presence of his students and the need for community, both in the classroom that bell hooks speaks of and in his home life as well. Love is part of the relationships and part of the building of community relationships. Love is the context that Patrick practices his passionate teaching within.

The creation of community, albeit fantasy, based on clouded remembrances of past farm experiences, allows a structure for Patrick's relationships and his support of those relationships in pursuit of completion of the lacking that he endures.

Voice is given to Patrick as a father and teacher, where voice was not given to Patrick the child and student. He listens to other voices and in return, his own voice is given privilege by "others" who need to be heard. Patrick's students invited him to be heard at their graduation ceremonies and privileged him above other voices from their

school experience. This recognition went a long way towards completing the lacking that Patrick wrestles with in his daily reflections.

It might be speculated that community allows for the laws of love, while relationships allow for the spiritual and voice for the power that satisfies eros. In all, love satisfies the need for completion while passion provides the energy and compassion, the means to that end.

So, what creates and keeps the passion alive in Patrick? It is possible that his pursuit of completion, his strong sense of lacking creates the desire to be passionate and in turn compassionate.

Patrick, as seen through his conversations from the Freudian and Lacanian perspective, is lacking a sense of fatherhood and he is desirous of knowing and being a good father. This might drive his passion to be compassionate as a teacher and his need for recognition as a good father/teacher. If we look at the Buddhist perspective, according to Sonia MacPherson (1996, p. 459), the focus is on the attainment of emptiness and that is driven by a desire for clear thinking, compassionate living, and the goal of attaining Nirvana through lived experience and meditation. If we look at Patrick through this lens, we see a man wishing to go back to simpler times on the farm, a move that could lead to clearer thinking through emptying the mind of current social and edonomic pressures. He also places great value on his relationship with students and his ability to help them through difficult times. Patrick values the relationship over the job of teaching curriculum and demanding order. He also focuses his attention on the neediest of students. It could be said that he desires compassionate living as evidenced through his actions with students in his care.

My Understanding of Patrick

Patrick represents himself as an upright Christian family man and a dedicated teacher on a mission to make things right for young people. He lives the discourse of the passionate teacher, father, and husband within the boundaries that his self concept has developed. This representation comes from the point of view of a young boy who struggled in life without the father he wanted and needed. The signifiers that have developed as a result of the melding of his conscious and subconscious desires and his self-representation are fairness, spirituality, and relationship and all are subject to the master signifier of father.

Chapter 7: Experiencing Laura

As I probed my history for answers I also unearthed
new questions, some of which I am still examining.
(Laura)

Laura is a retired teacher in her mid sixties. She taught for almost 30 years and retired eight years ago. Laura is the youngest child of ten children. She grew up and continues to live in the small rural community where her family roots are plentiful and respected. Laura and her retired teacher husband have two boys who are now married with children. She is an accomplished artist and musician. Laura taught primary school, junior high school, and high school in her extensive career as a generalist, a language arts teacher, French, math, art, and music teacher.

First Telling (Round 1)
(Responding to *The Courage to Teach*)

. . . being remembered.

I think, sometimes, even when we assume a class has been a failure, there are children who are still learning. My brother convinced me to spare for bowling about three weeks ago and this woman on my team rushed up to me. She said, "I haven't seen you in 40 years." I taught her in my first year. Well, I do not look like I did 40 years ago, yet she recognized me instantly. This shows that a teacher means a lot to a child, when their manner, their face, their way of talking and so on becomes a very important thing to them.

. . . remembering students – boys.

Sometimes you read about somebody's negative impression of a teacher and you think, was it like that or could it have been just a little bit different, or could that person have misunderstood. I know that some of my most fulfilling feedback is from boys. I think in today's education boys, especially less than quiet studious boys, are not given the "short end" that they once were. At one time, teachers tended to prefer quiet, well-mannered, homework always done females. More rambunctious boys, who were slightly different, with just as much to offer, were not always given a chance.

In retrospect, once you are a teacher, you are always a teacher. Often in my dreams I go back to little Freddy Wright, a rambunctious little boy with lots of disabilities, and one of my very favourite students. I got a letter from Freddy when he

was in Grade 4, and I saved it. He sent it in the middle of the summer in the mail. It was about how much he loved that year and how he felt about a particular incident that happened. It was a problem between him and a little girl. I didn't take her side because he was innocent and I had taken the position that he was innocent until proven guilty.

While I was teaching Grade 1, a family moved in from Germany and their child who knew a little English was in my class. He knew his numbers one to five and his colours. While he was in Grade 1 he learned English, he was a very smart boy. I was just so proud of this young man. But, by the time he was out of high school he was in prison for a 20 year term. When I heard about it, I remember thinking "how awful, but he was a success in school." Interestingly, sometimes those you think of as your failures, go on to be successful in life. He (the child from Germany) could be a success for that year, but you couldn't follow him through life. The same kind of intelligence that allowed him to learn English so quickly got him into big crime that gave him a long sentence by the time he was 19. I saw no sign of it in Grade 1. He was a model student.

. . . being a life long adventurer.

As somebody who taught to the end and then retired, I can't imagine myself doing less than my best to the day. I mean, even then (when I retired), I didn't feel a terrible "wow, I'm glad that's over." I never felt that. In fact, I've been back in schools often.

I can't believe I found time to teach because I'm never sitting there with that space of time I always thought was going to happen. Oh, I thought, I'll be able to read more books, but the cello now takes much of that time up. It has taken up a huge chunk of my time. I started lessons two months after I retired. This might have come about as a result of my husband listening to my retirement speech. The kids had been asking what I was going to do and I said that I wanted to ocean kayak and white water kayak. I did that immediately, the next month on a white water river. Since then I have ocean kayaked too. I wanted to work at a garden centre and I did that in the spring, at Hills Greenhouses, where I worked for one season. As well, I wanted to play the cello, so my husband arranged for lessons on my birthday in September following my retirement. When the instructor asked him how long, he talked to them about a few months. Let's see, I'm in year five now. There are so many choices you can make - money not withstanding. I retired in 1996.

. . . becoming a teacher

When I was approaching the end of high school I knew I wanted to go on to post secondary. My father wasn't exactly excited about that prospect so he said we would make an appointment with my teacher, who was a nun. We sat down with my marks, and filled out my application and we decided what I was going to be. Right from Grade 6, in retrospect, the excellent teachers who had the most impact on me were all math, science. In high school I was part of a physics group who went to the Convention, nine boys and me. I was the only girl in physics. I just loved math and science and I was thinking of furthering my career in that area, but of course, my high school homeroom teacher would

have none of that and she decided I was going into education. My English wasn't very strong because I had Grey Nuns for English teachers right from Grade 10. We studied little histories of the Catholic Church in Quebec. I went to school at a country high school. Our library was very, very, very limited and the world of books wasn't there for me. But when I got to university I was opened up to the world of English.

I have always had an absolute love of learning. Right from before school, I'd have a million questions for my parents. I came from a large extended family and a huge community so there was lots of interaction with people. I always wondered why everybody else wasn't asking a million questions. I was only asking the ones I thought I should, and had way more questions behind just pushing to get out. I can remember being about three years old, maybe four in downtown Edmonton. I wanted to know how the street system worked. I was reading those numbers up there, and I was not supposed to be reading and he (my father) was embarrassed that I could read them. I asked questions like, "does this street get numbered all the way down or does it change numbers or how does this work?" Wait until you go to school (my father would say). I just couldn't wait until I went to school.

So I got into education that way, but I knew it was going to be OK right from the time I got into it. I totally changed my major and minor, mind you, and ended up in English and Math, which is a strange combination. It is exciting sharing that love of learning that I have always liked with children. There is a particular challenge in making boys love music and French and opening a world for them that they often close their minds to. I hope I am opening it and it will stay at least a gap forever.

I have my Grade 1 report card and I have all my marks. They are all top, in fact, I skipped Grade 2 with a little mark in the bottom - skipped Grade 2. I got a failing grade, which was F at that time, in posture. I failed posture because I couldn't sit straight in my desk, and I always had my foot under me, or I was leaning over doing something.

<u>First Telling (Round 2)</u>
(Responding to an important personal photograph)

I chose this picture of farm, girl, and horse. I had it put away for years. A cousin of mine, who lives at this place now, asked if we had some photos of the old house that we lived in the first year we were married, so we went through all our photographs and we found six with the house in it. The problem was that there was a huge hedge in front that hid a lot of the house. To thank us for giving her those pictures, she presented us with this enlarged picture. Originally, it was just a tiny black and white. She gave it to me just before Christmas and I got a frame for it immediately and put it up. It was a very significant time in my life. It was the first year we were married, and so I was in my third year of teaching. By then, I had done a couple of dozen flips from grade to grade, subject to subject. This was the beginning of my history of flipping everywhere in education. We were in the country and we had two horses, which was also the story of my life. We

lived in a teacherage for the next few years and farmed our horses out. I was pregnant in this picture, though I didn't know it at the time. This was the beginning of my family. We were living in our great uncle's house because we could keep the horses there. We didn't know it then, but just after this time, which was probably October, we got the first snowstorm of the snowiest winter that I have ever lived through. We actually had to hook up that big horse to the car to get the car out of the lane many mornings to get to school. We bought Tumbleweed, who was destined for a meat packing plant out of the stockyards, with my money about a week after we were engaged. We bought Pyrites, fools gold you know, before we got married. By the time we got married we had two horses and Pyrites was very handy in that he could pull the car. As I was saying, it was a very, very snowy winter. We couldn't get to school without the horses. We had this little Mini Morris, little Austin, and we'd put the horse up to the car and pull it out of the lane.

Although I was happily pregnant, I was toxic and very sick and it was a trying winter. But, it was a happy time and it was sort of the beginning, I guess, of a giant step in my life that sort of foretold what the rest of it would be. Oddly enough, we have come back to live in that area.

First Telling (Round 3)
(Responding to Dr. Seuss and the newspaper)

I can't think of a Dr. Seuss book without thinking of the time when Jo was teaching Grade 1 and I was teaching Grade 4. We decided to put on Seuss for Christmas. It was so hilarious. We sent the directions for the costumes we wanted the parents to make, published straight out of the book. We had more variations. They were all supposed to send a sac that could be filled and that went around the neck. It seemed very, very simple. It ended up being a large problem. We spent a lot of time on the phone before the concert explaining the pattern that we sent home. We thought it was rather simple and self-explanatory until we got the costumes in. We would just roll in laughter every day when the costumes started to arrive. All these Who's were supposed to look, you know, very much the same, they lived in Who Ville after all. They were supposed to be brown. Well, the brown varied from an off green to black to beige. We thought it was a roaring success but the Who's were different.

Seuss had an incredible mind. I think the fact that he illustrated his own books showed his amazing ability, and the kids loved his illustrations. I don't know if the phase is still in but teenagers were wearing Doctor Seuss hats a couple of years ago.

. . . experiencing community.

My mind immediately jumped back to one very, very snowy November. I think Jo and Shirley were there. Shirley was in charge of phys. ed. and I think I was new to the music program. We decided that instead of stuffing everyone into the gym, for Christmas concert, where the front people could hear and the back people couldn't see, we would combine phys. ed and Christmas concert. We had an absolutely fabulous scheme where we would start exactly on the half hour, putting on little presentations and we thought

those who were not performing would be skating around in the rink in the arena for 15 to 20 minutes per class. We had volunteers bring in this absolutely gorgeous tall Christmas tree and they decorated it and it was just beautiful. We had a big blizzard the week of the concert and we thought this would just work perfectly, minimum or no costumes and if they got there fine and if they didn't, there would be no problem because the classes were just singing as a group.

However, we had an absolute revolt on our hands. The parents who got there for the kindergarten performance wouldn't move. They wouldn't move off to make room for the Grade 1s and they didn't want to skate, and they didn't want to leave. We had an up staircase and a down staircase for safety reasons and the people manning them finally threw up their hands and said, "No one's listening."

We had phone calls following the event. They said, this is not what a Christmas concert is supposed to be. The kids, however, thoroughly enjoyed themselves. They had an absolutely fun day. I still regret that we went totally back to the old kind of Christmas concert. The next Christmas concert was probably as traditional as we have ever had. I think we did the wrong thing. I think we should have tried it again, changed a few things and tried to keep a more open mind towards the whole celebration.

This Christmas celebration made our November and December much easier. The learning just continued merrily along in the phys. ed program, and the music program, everything flowed beautifully. But it wasn't what those parents had expected and they wanted that traditional Christmas concert where they could sit there, whether they could hear or not, and watch the whole thing.

I really didn't take it personally. I was surprised. Everybody said, hey, this is going to be so nice and at the end, it wasn't. November and December just flowed along merrily. The people manning the phones were probably in the worst place for the next week of December and the first week of January. Was the criticism fair in any way if it was a celebration of Christmas and the children really enjoyed themselves and it was no hardship to the parents? In fact, if they had stopped to think of it, every parent could have appreciated their child even that much more because they had a much closer view. In the end, we reverted to the old concert and I'm not sure we should have.

We brought in Artists in Residence once. We had dancers and we didn't know until they arrived on Monday that they had never done this Artists in Residence program before and they had no idea what education is all about. I think it took us three weeks to get all the kids desks and belongings back in place. Well, some of them never did get their supplies back for the rest of the school year. We were supposed to have a staff meeting with them every day to review the program. Teachers were refusing to go to the meeting and if they went, they would give them a piece of their mind. (Laughter)

It could have been wonderful if they had had more experience in teaching and organization. Basically, in this week, the children were supposed to participate in K-4 cross-graded groups. The children were supposed to write the music, the lyrics, decide

on costume and put a production on for the whole community as a celebration at the end. I think that a school that is willing to take on a challenge like and surviving the disappointments is still a better school than one that said, no way, this is too out of it. We learned a lot and the children probably learned some. The dancers were absolutely top notch. They were just fabulous.

Re-Telling as Theming (Round 1)
(Discussing the response to *The Courage to Teach*)

. . . becoming a teacher.

As I read my words from our group discussion and think back to the time when I was choosing a profession, I realize it does seem that I slipped into that particular choice. The time was one of fewer choices for females. My high school teachers were pushing in the direction of my becoming a teacher or a nurse. My father was against the two years secondary education that I enrolled in and was totally in opposition to any further education, thus eliminating anything that would require an immediate degree. I was expected to enter the work force quickly so that I could help with home finances for my family and seven younger siblings. As all of these reasons probably indicate to any casual observer of that time, my choice was a combination of chance and outside forces. On the rocky road of life, I rolled into the education hole in the road and was not dislodged for 36 years.

Other influences, perhaps more favourable, kept me there. Two years after I started teaching, I married a man who was in the process of switching from journalism to education. Also, unlike my family, he had a favourable view of women's careers. Moreover, I was fortunate to have good babysitting for the three children I had in the next six years.

However, it wasn't just luck that brought or kept me there. As I mentioned in the group discussion, I had always had an intense desire to learn. I was that student, not always admired, who chose to sit in the front row if possible, who listened attentively to all instructors. I did have many excellent teachers and one in particular was an inspiration. I always enjoyed helping anyone who had problems. I sympathized and empathized with people who had difficulties, sometimes going to extremes in helping the downtrodden.

Probably basic to all this discussion, I loved teaching. I wandered through many subjects and grade levels in my career. I really can say I enjoyed them all, some more than others. I moved due to circumstance or new challenges but never due to boredom. Education was a career that suited my soul.

"I hope you dance" is a popular song right now. The opening goes,

I hope you never lose your sense of wonder
You get your fill to eat but always keep that hunger

It goes on,

> I hope you never fear those mountains in the distance
> Never settle for the path of least resistance

That is a hope for life in this song, but it is also teaching. It is what kept me there and it is what I hoped for my students. The song ends,

> And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance
> I hope you dance.

I danced.

Re-Telling as Theming (Round 2)
(Discussing the response to an important personal photograph)

I have enjoyed being a member of the research group on passion for teaching. Discussion of teaching and learning obviously suits the interests of someone who has been in the profession for thirty-six years. These discussions were particularly interesting because they involved a close look at my own motivations, a look from a slightly different angle. As I probed my history for answers I also unearthed new questions, some of which I am still examining.

Some of the questions are about situations that go back the furthest in time. The history of my decisions to go into the field of education indicates outside influences and an element of chance. This raises many questions; What if I had entered another career? Would I have been as happy there? Would I have switched careers?

On the other hand, the probing raised no questions about whether or not I loved teaching. I did have a passion for it, as strong in reminiscence as it was in life. Looking back at these feelings has been very pleasant.

Re-Telling as Theming (Round 3)
(Discussing the response to Dr. Seuss and the newspaper)

I chose the story of the Christmas concert because I think it reflects on my passion for teaching in a variety of ways. For one, it was very innovative. Susan Smith and I came up with this idea and we were very excited about it. Imagine - a totally different kind of concert. - a family turkey dinner - cooked by the ladies group of the village, a concert by each grade - K to 4 - where all the parents of each grade would be up close and able to see, and a family skate around a beautiful tall decorated tree downstairs in the arena. It was the stuff of the Norman Rockwell painting, and we passionate teachers thought it perfect for that very snowy winter.

We had a blizzard the day of the concert, yet people struggled through blocked roads to get to the arena. We knew we were in trouble when the kindergarten program

was over and their parents refused to move to make way for the Grade 1 parents. By the time Grade 4 parents squeezed in the edges of "standing room only" we had chaos. Teachers met and made alternate plans, trying to direct people out of the alarmingly overcrowded room and down onto the ice. A teacher without passion might have called in sick the next day but we all appeared to help support the office staff who had to man the many phone calls of complaint. I think we fell short. Instead of reverting to a traditional gym concert the next year, we could have used our passion for teaching to try another version of that very different concert. After all, the children did love it and maybe we could have opened up the parents' views, perhaps changed their opinions. I can't tell the story without laughing. The laugh was partly on me. But I'll always regret not trying again.

Re-Telling Meta-Narratively (Round 1)
(Discussing the responses to *The Courage to Teach*)

Laura initiates her conversation with a representation of herself as a caring teacher who questions the value of her contribution to the lives of students. She is pleased to be recognized after so many years and she ponders the significance of that recognition. Laura speculates that she and other teachers must have the ability to impact long term on their students and she revels in the recognition that comes to her after so many years. At the same time, Laura ponders the reasons for the recognition. In her story about Freddy, she speculates that it is her ability to administer fairness that has blessed her with the long-term recognition that she cherishes. At the same time, she remembers her very bright little Grade 1 student who ended up in prison and she wonders about her role in all of that. Laura considers whether or not she could have done more for this child and resigns her observation to the fact that she "saw no sign of it in Grade 1. He was a model student."

Laura's immediate recollections of students in our conversations are restricted to the boys that she saw as needing her attention. She goes so far as to identify their greater need, greater than the "well mannered homework-doing girls." Further, she developed, according to her comments, a mission to provide support for the boys who might

otherwise be subject to the "short end." Laura wants the boys to encounter a positive learning experience and the extended knowledge of the fine arts through French and music.

It is interesting to note that Laura competed with the boys in maths and sciences as a student herself. She found herself at the science "Convention" with nine boys. The other male that Laura mentions is her father. He is represented in her conversation as having little patience for a very inquisitive little girl. He is also very opinionated about the options that Laura might elect for a career. In a historical time, in a rural context, as the father of a large family, his views about the place of women are clear as he excludes as options the math and science career that Laura might have chosen. The mention of females in Laura's story is restricted to the teacher nuns who choose her career for her and limit her experience in English to their own limited francophone, and cloistered view. The other mention of females is those students who were "well mannered, homework always done females" and the "other" who accused Freddy of ill doing.

In this conversation, Laura shows us a glimmer of a girl who has had to be strong in her convictions to compete with the "boys" at school. As a child, she has had to rally the attention of her father to her higher level intellect, an intellect not valued by men of his day. Laura's connection to females has been either to observe the docile nature of the well behaved, or to feel the power of the nun's in authority.

Laura concludes her first conversation by reminding us that she was very bright as she mentions her skipping Grade 2. At the same time, she shares with us that she was not an observer of the rules as she earned an F in posture. Laura probably finds companionship with the rowdy boys rather than the proper girls as a child. It is no

wonder that she remembers the boys who were her students and from her point of view, in need of intellectual stimulation like French and music. After all, Laura was, and remains, in need of the same adventures in learning.

As Laura reflects on our first conversation, she recognizes that teaching, though not her choice, at first suited her need for learning. It provided her with the opportunity to continue to feed her own hunger for learning adventures, and it afforded her the opportunity to touch the lives of others. A significant male in her life, her husband, provided a different perspective on the role of women than did her father and the Grey Nuns. With his encouragement, Laura pursued many aspects of teaching over a 36-year career. It is true that Laura "rolled into the education hole in the road" as she puts it; however, her decision to remain there has much to do with fulfilling a need of Laura's to be an active learner and a life participant who "danced."

Re-Telling Meta-narratively (Round 2)
(Discussing the responses to an important personal photograph)

In the second telling, Laura connects her traditional and family roots to her developing family and her development as a teacher. She shares her valuing of heritage through the privilege given to the old home, the old horses, the old methods of moving a vehicle and contrasts that to the new changes in her body as an expectant mother and her new view of herself as a teacher. In her reflection on this time and place in her life, Laura's teaching career is moving from the settled long term teaching position to the potpourri of teaching assignments that will follow her throughout her career. This is happening as she remembers herself as the unknowing host to a developing child. It is her memory of the past, tempered with her knowing of the past-future and the now that gives perspective to the signifiers in her life.

Laura comments on the melding of the discourses of her life development and her becoming a passionate teacher. She recognizes that her career choice was constructed by "outside influences and an element of chance," and that her reflection on this decision requires that she probe her history for answers. Her memory of herself as a passionate teacher, she describes, "as strong in reminiscence as it was in life." In a relatively short passage, Laura comments on memory as " reminiscence," "reflection," "looking back," "a look from a slightly different angle," "going back further in time," "probe my history." At the end of this short reflection there is little said and much implied. It is a process that Laura is working through that leaves her somewhat concerned about they way decisions were made in her life, yet firm in her commitment that her teaching career was, and remains, passionate.

Re-Telling Meta-Narratively (Round 3)
(Discussing the responses to Dr. Seuss and the newspaper)

Laura seeks the opportunity to be creative. She finds ways to bring children, community, educators, and curriculum together that are fun and larger than the mere effective lesson. She seeks opportunities for life lessons for her students and in doing so, she finds herself in a place to do life learning. Laura seeks wisdom beyond reflective practice. She looks to construct new ways of learning and when the new ways run into difficulty, she struggles to deconstruct the old ways of being in favour of a reconstruction that leads to the learning that she values. Laura wants her students to connect as she does to the artistry in the world around them. She works towards pushing the boundaries of community acceptance in favour of big picture learning for her students.

My Understanding of Laura

Laura represents herself as a demure and humble colleague who learns as she moves through her life journey from those around her. She is a dynamic person who constantly tests the boundaries in search of the next creative trail to follow. Her teaching expertise is broad and extensive; her creative gifts are amazing as a watercolour artist, carver, and crafter of willow, stained glass and more. A key signifier that lives within Laura is the constant search for the power of proof of worthiness. At one time this proof was to be offered to her father, but now it is sought for her own satisfaction.

What was it that kept Laura passionate throughout her extensive teaching career? It is the same thing that continues to fuel her retirement pursuits. She has a need to challenge new visions. Throughout Laura's teaching career, she was able to move through different grade levels and different subject areas as her need dictated. Recognition came to her from colleagues, students and her husband for the amazing job that she did within each new domain. Laura felt the satisfaction on each occasion that being "successful" within the new set of boundaries offered. Retrospectively, Laura's administrators, perhaps unknowingly, provided the support that Laura needed. She needed opportunities to challenge change and the recognition for successfully doing so. She responded with an outstanding career as a passionate teacher. Her father would have been proud of her.

Chapter 8: Experiencing Cheryl

What keeps me going is encouragement and respect
from others (Cheryl)

Cheryl is an experienced teacher of elementary, junior high, core curriculum and counselling. She has two teenaged daughters and is married to an independent businessman. She has studied at the post graduate level, but, at least for now, feels that her life goals are best met closer to home. She enjoys teaching, her roles as mother and wife, and her position in a small community as a respected professional and active community member. Cheryl considers herself to be a valuable member of her school, community, and family teams where she gives leadership and willingly offers to follow the leadership of others. Her first and second stories are rich with evidence of her desires and identity as a "team player," woman, and teacher.

Cheryl was the pilot teacher for this study and she only participated in the portion of the research that was connected to the "important personal photograph." Her conversation was, however, a valuable part of the project.

First Telling
(Responding to an important personal photograph)

. . . experiencing respect.

In this picture of me, I was a star. It was junior high. This fellow [in the photo] was a university student who is now a Phys. Ed. teacher at Aurora. He had a very troubled family of his own. He kind of adopted my mom after the first year of coaching. So the second year, he was the coach and my mom was the manager. My dad was my personal coach because I was the pitcher. We had become a family, the coach and my parents and me. It was one of the best times of my life because I was the pitcher, which automatically makes you the star, and I was good. It is one of those things in your life when you think back and you say, "Yup now that's one thing that I was really good at," – probably because I loved it – probably because there was a connection with my dad. He loved to catch for me and we would practice for hours. He tied a tire to a fence and I had to try and get the ball in the centre of the tire. It was a big production to build the skill and to keep me going. The rest of the team respected me without being left out (sometimes when you get that respect you are not part of the team anymore). I didn't lose that connection with them either because of my coach. He was most humble and believed we are in this together, and we do this as a team. Long before the days when they were telling coaches to make sure things were clear before the game and if anybody has a dispute they have to sort it – before any of those coaching techniques were taught, he did it naturally. Even at the warm-up before a game or practice, if he sensed some tension between anybody, he'd go and quietly help them deal with it so that we were a unit.

. . . experiencing competition.

Sarah was my best friend. She doesn't look very happy there but most of the time she was. She was someone who was better than me in every other aspect of my life. She was a stronger student; more aggressive or more assertive, she was goal driven. She's a lawyer now. Sarah lived, "I'm here and this is what I'm going to do and nothing is going to stop me." She set her goals and went for them. Because we were best friends it was reassuring for me to have one thing where I could excel. Softball was that one part of my life where I could compete. I think it made our friendship stronger because I didn't always feel like the underdog with her. There was at least one place where we were on equal footing. Even though I was smart too, I just didn't have the same drive that she did. She was someone that I respected and admired and I guess I wanted her to respect and admire me in some way too. I think I felt that by being the star pitcher it gave me that edge.

. . . experiencing friendship and support.

Four years we were together. I think the coach taught us at first because it would look good on his resume – he was in the faculty of Phys. Ed. However, he stayed with us for three years and every year we got stronger. The picture was taken in the final year we were together. We went all the way and won the Provincial Championship for Alberta. That was a huge thrill. Even though we were together for so long, there are some girls that I remember so clearly – everything about them, yet when I look at this picture, there are some I can't even remember them being on the team. I'm not sure why.

Linda went on to be anorexic and was hospitalized for some time. That was really sad – I remember Linda. We were friends. She was just a year younger than Sarah and we were friends too. I remember I always felt that it was my job to help the coach to make sure that everybody was getting along and that everybody was treated well. He spent more time with me than he did with the other girls because my parents were involved with the team. I remember Linda complaining to me one day, we were walking home after practice, and she said to me, "Why do you always have to be so nice?" I remember just being so shocked and saying to her, "What's wrong with that?" She was very frustrated by that. She said, "You are always sticking up for the underdog." She was complaining about all of the things that I valued so dearly. We had one girl who quit after the first year. She was a large girl who was never clean and she always smelled. She was one of the kids who had no friends at school and she just instantly became the one that I would look after. It really bugged Linda that I was helping this girl and I couldn't understand why.

Brenda was just wild. She had five kids by the time she was twenty-three and smiling all the time. She had the first one at seventeen and she ended up marrying the guy. They had five together by the time they were in their early twenties and the two of them were just happier than pigs in dodo.

I enjoyed that whole sense of being a part of the team and knowing that I could rely on them. If I was having a bad game it didn't mean that they were all going to be mad at me. As the pitcher, I could count on the constant encouragement of the catcher who was always talking, "come on Cheryl," "whip it in there." The infield too was always encouraging you and talking you up. I had that constant support, that constant positive feedback of "we believe in you" and "we know that you can do this."

. . . experiencing power.

I used to love playing another team and hearing them say "Oh God, it's that girl who pitches . . . oh no, its that one who pitches so fast, oh no." It was a little power trip (laughter). They were afraid of me. I wasn't like that in any other part of my life. I was more passive than assertive and so this was just such an opportunity to be someone else – to be a different way. Just putting on my uniform made me stand taller and the shoulders go back and, you known, I'd walk out on the mound, and this is my game, and this is what I do and boy this is going to be fun.

. . . experiencing disappointment.

But then, of course, all good things come to an end. We were too old to play community league level anymore, and so if I wanted to continue playing I had to try out for one of the city teams. It just destroyed it for me. I tried out for Red Rockets and I made it. Most of the women on the team were in their thirties. Betsy and I were the only two who tried out. We both made it, but the coach of the Red Rockets was the pitcher and there was no room for another pitcher. When I went to the first practices they gave me the choice of what position I wanted to try out for, and of course I wanted to pitch. The first practices were in February in a gym over in Aurora and of course because you are in a gym you can't use real fastballs, so we used these little lightweight plastic balls with holes in them. I couldn't pitch them. They just totally threw me off. There was no weight and I just panicked and lost my technique and lost my confidence. The coach stood there watching me and said nothing. She just watched me fall apart and totally destroyed my confidence. There was just no, "well, let's leave it go, do something else, we'll wait 'til we're outside, you can use a real fast ball." There was no, "take ten minutes, relax." It was just again, again, again and the more I pitched the wilder they got and the more I lost control, to the point that I was in tears and then she walked away. I made the team, but I never got to pitch.

But it surprises me looking back now how easily she could destroy what I had built up over four years. I haven't pitched a ball since that day. I played for Central teams, fun teams, but they'd say what position do you play, and I'd say third base because that's what I played in the city. I never tried to pitch again. And that's sad. It doesn't matter any more in the big picture. But how sad that she would choose to do that. How could she feel so threatened by a sixteen year old? (Laughter) I only played for one year and it just wasn't the same, so I let it go after that. I didn't play until I started teaching and I played just for fun out here with some women and then when I had my own family, my own kids. I play with my kids. I coached T-ball one year and Tracy

plays now, so last year I was the scorekeeper for her team. I like to help her practice and to cheer her on, and I like just reminiscing about what it was like for me.

. . . experiencing a connection.

I was quite excited to talk about it because looking back it is probably one of the best parts of my life. It also leads naturally into a whole teaching situation, it's the same thing. If you are respected by your peers then they encourage you and they try to keep you going. When you lose it, they pick you up again. It is similar situation, except that I'm not the star any more, (laughter), but that's OK. It's a team, it's still that whole thing that you are not out there doing it by yourself and that there is back up there when you need it. I think part of the counselling job is still that I want to make sure everybody is OK. It is interesting that the kids that I remember the clearest are the ones who had the most difficulty in their own lives. They are the ones I connect with the most. Even though Brenda was happy with her five kids, it made her life pretty crazy. And even though Sarah was so capable and so focused and directed she still needed a lot of support.

Re-Telling as Theming
(Discussing the response to an important personal photograph)

. . . experiencing the team.

For me, teaching has to be a team effort; I couldn't do it if I felt isolated. I need constant support and encouragement of peers - always two to three key people as a support network, and others as well.

I need to practice leadership, or feel leadership, but I don't want to be the one in charge (the administrator). I'm too easily crushed by criticism to be the "front line" leader. I am comfortable in leading in other ways i.e. speaking up when I believe as a team we're not acting in the best interest of the kids. I love interacting with others, kids too, at all levels. I love laughing together, supporting and consoling others, encouraging and challenging others, and being the receiver of all of this too. I feel respected and valued for the work I do, by my peers, my family, and my community. I'm very satisfied by my job; I have a need to help, to take troubled kids under my wing. It's rewarding for me.

Much of what I do and how I am is a continuation of the way my parents were with others. The ball team is a model of the situation I work best in, I want to be supportive of a strong leader, to be accepted and respected by the rest of the team, and to do whatever I can to support and look after them too. Probably playing ball showed me the best environment possible for me to function in, but it's interesting that what led me into education in the first place was the desire to help kids, especially those with special needs. I didn't give much thought to the "team player" aspect of being in a school until years later. I guess it just happens on an almost unconscious level.

What keeps me going is encouragement and respect from others. It is important for me to know how and where to get it when I need it. I need to be a caregiver. I enjoy watching my own children struggle and succeed. I have a desire to help other kids through difficult times as well.

I have such respect for my parents, and for all the "coaches" in their many roles throughout my life. It seems only natural to try to emulate them.

Re-Telling Meta-Narratively
(Discussing the responses to an important personal photograph)

In Cheryl's first telling, the discourse contains a number of key signifiers. The interrelationships she describes are embedded in two basic discourses, that of family and team. Within these boundaries, Cheryl describes herself as a "star" on the team, attended to by coach, father coach, and mother manager. Order is another signifier found in the nature of the interdependent relationships of her choice. Cheryl chose to develop relationships with those she judged to be in need of support. She spoke fondly of her coach who came from a difficult home situation and her best friend's sister who suffered from an eating disorder. She also devoted considerable time to explaining a fringe relationship with a team member who was "wild," married young, and burdened with five children. Cheryl felt responsible for the "underdog," like one girl who had poor hygiene and didn't fit in with the rest of the team. In the order of things, Cheryl saw herself as the glue that bound the team together by using her higher order to support those she deemed to be in need. She chose Sarah for her best friend, the one person who caused her to compete for a position as academic and team "star." To this day, she holds her in high regard and compares her own life successes to Sarah's.

Power is a clear signifier in this narrative. Cheryl wished to be known as the "star," and elaborated that picture with the desire to be known as, "Oh God, it's that girl who pitches." Further to the desire for great power, Cheryl feared the loss of that power

as evidenced in her unhappy experience with the Red Rockets. She viewed this last baseball experience as a failure because of the unwillingness of the team to acknowledge her and her expected order. Her position as successful and valued player and friend was threatened and Cheryl chose to place her energy elsewhere; in the end, she moved on to family and career.

Cheryl's concerns about otherness signify an acknowledgement of her own place as other. Cheryl sought those companions who, in her judgment, needed to be supported and given voice. She contributed to the coach's voice by helping him to manage team harmony, and she acknowledged the voices of her parents by including them in the description of a team photograph that excluded them. Cheryl even acknowledged and questioned why she did not give voice to the students whose faces she saw in the picture, yet did not remember. Cheryl gives the status of coach and mentor to both the team coach and her father, and the status of manager to her mother. There is a defining of roles within the framework of team and family in the father signified as coach and mother as manager. The significance of the father coach and mother manager in Cheryl's narrative reveals a giving of privilege to the coach position as mentor and comments on a lesser role, undefined by Cheryl of the manager.

Conflict and a desire for harmony are signified by the description of her need to assist the coach with making connections and managing disputes. It is her view that team harmony is what facilitated the team's rise to competitive and successful play. Further evidence of this desire rests in Cheryl's memory selection of Linda. In this relationship Linda appeared to be critical of Cheryl, "Why do you always have to be so nice?" Cheryl found this criticism disturbing and went on to defend her valuing of being supportive of

the "underdog." Certainly the questioning caused Cheryl to think about what she valued. Cheryl finds disharmony and criticism uncomfortable.

There is tensionality in Cheryl's story between the desire for "star" status and the need for harmony, seen as the discourse of competition and the discourse of cooperation. Cheryl's lived experiences are motivated by a desire to live within and between the two. When Cheryl is representing herself as a baseball player, she seeks the competitive zone and star status. When she is representing herself as coach and caregiver, she seeks the cooperative zone and harmony. Although the concepts of competition and cooperation seem to be at odds with one another, Cheryl seems content in her place between. It is in this place between, however, that Cheryl reflects and questions her goals and values. Linda's criticism and Cheryl's discomfort with that criticism are evidence of potential for deconstructive thinking on Cheryl's part. "Why do you always have to be so nice?" is the question with which Linda provokes Cheryl. The other place of Cheryl's real discomfort is in the failure to be recognized as the "star" by the Red Rockets. Once again there is potential for Cheryl to reflect in a deconstructive way. These two discomforts live within Cheryl through her ongoing dialogue in her continuing lived experiences - in her life narrative.

Cheryl observes her own narrative and discovers that her desire is for harmony and her fear is the loss of respect. She continues the metaphor of the team as the master signifier and chooses to be enframed by the comfortable boundaries of that signifier. Her role is consciously selected as the student and mentor. She acknowledges four significant coaches in her life and patterns her behaviour to emulate the successful student/mentor relationship. She also continues to seek mentorship for herself. Cheryl openly

acknowledges that her desire for respect and comfort are not to be compromised by standing alone on an issue. Instead, she chooses to help steer the team in the direction that, in her mind, is best for the team and their students under the guiding hand of what she calls a "strong leader."

The master signifier in this text is team. The longings and expectations that define the baseball team as represented in the photograph have been transported to the school community. The slippage between Cheryl's baseball team and school team is found in the evolution of Cheryl's prioritizing of harmony over celebrity. The underlying signifier may well be a role defined within the relationship of Cheryl and her coach father and manager mother, with Cheryl struggling to operationalize both models for herself. She speaks in her retelling of the long-standing family patterning that she identifies as leading her to the needs that she expressed for a sharing of the load. By virtue of the father coach role that is more developed than the mother manager, it could be speculated that Cheryl views her father as the "strong leader" in her life and her mother perhaps as the supporter. Cheryl might then be described as a productive blend of them both.

So, where did Cheryl's passion for teaching come from and how does it continue? Cheryl has lived the experience of warm, caring support and she likes what she felt. She has had the opportunity to enjoy "stardom" and she liked the way that felt. She has endured the failure that shakes one's confidence and she seeks to avoid that. She continues to seek to emulate that warm feeling for herself and to share it with both her colleagues and her children at home and at school. She models the mentor and the learner and continually feels both sides of the binary. In doing so, she is constantly reinforced and supported through the team model that she carefully nurtures.

My Understanding of Cheryl

For Cheryl the power rests in her ability to continually support the harmony of the team she works with and to support the needy students she counsels. This is the expression of her desire for success as a respected teacher. This power would be lost if her position on the team were to be compromised and so she takes great care to work within the framework of her team and chosen role as partner, referring the tough and unpopular decisions to the "strong leader." In this way, Cheryl keeps strong and focused on her mission in life which, fortunately for us, is found in her mentorship of children.

Cheryl, identified by many as a passionate teacher, has found satisfaction for herself and for her students over the years. It could then be assumed that the effect of her emotional context has been positive. Cheryl views herself as a "passionate teacher." To her, this means the teacher who leads and follows and interacts with children and colleagues by sharing in laughter, support, encouragement, and challenge. Cheryl's passionate teacher has earned the respect of significant others and has a need within to help. This passion, for Cheryl, is constructed through the patterning of her own formative years with supportive family relationships and role modeling. Within the patterning and role modeling, a desire to help children was developed linking Cheryl's needs with her students' needs. The end result is a need driven by desire that is beneficial in meeting the needs of children.

Cheryl needs to be safe from criticism and situations that put her at odds with her colleagues. Her strength is found in harmony, not in controversy. Neumann (1997) observes that the researcher must seek to view the space between the subject and the self. When I compare my experiences with Cheryl's, I see that we are not alike in many ways.

My family history differs greatly from hers, and I find myself contemplating the disharmony that, over time, has fed my growing passion as a teacher.

Chapter 9: Experiencing Jane

Even though you are with 25 children, it is still very isolated professionally unless you seek out being with others. (Jane)

Jane is a primary teacher in her late forties who has taught for twenty-five years. She is married to a highly successful businessman and they have a son and a daughter, both of whom are attending university. Jane and her husband first lived in small town Alberta and then moved to a larger centre where they were quick to take advantage of the entertainment facilities. Jane's family is close. They live together, travel and play together whenever their busy schedules allow.

First Telling (Round 1)
(Responding to *The Courage to Teach*)

. . . experiencing random reinforcement

I often think as a teacher you get reinforced like a gambler does. It is a variable ratio so you can go longer. You get reinforced and suddenly you are keen again just the way it hooks you to gambling. You can't plan that reinforcement; you just get into that desire to keep teaching because you never know when that wonderful moment is going to come. In my first year of teaching an unexpected reinforcement was a phone call from a parent at the end of the day. This was in Upton where the kids went home at lunch time. First year teaching, when a parent phones you, it makes you nervous. She said, "What did you do to my child?" I asked, "What do you mean?"

She said, "Well he hated Kindergarten and he didn't want to go to school, I had to drag him to Grade 1. All of a sudden, today, he ate his lunch quickly and wanted to get back to school. What did you do?" What did I do? The last ten minutes that we had before lunch was filler time, so I was telling the kids about the old days when I went to school. Of course I was a mere 24 then. So I said we used to do a spelling bee. They had never heard of a spelling bee, so I asked if they would like to do one. I lined them all up to do a little spelling bee and that is what it was. It wasn't any great planning, any great lesson but it was just the right time for this little guy and he needed that. It was great for me too as a first year teacher. Although I didn't realize it at the time, I can make a difference for some kids. So it isn't the big lessons, it is those little things that go into place at the right time.

. . . experiencing creating hope.

The key, wearing my counsellor's hat, is the word hope. We know that people that are highest risk for suicide are those that feel hopelessness. You always have to be looking at ways of bringing hope and relationships to people. As long as you can see, and God knows this might not be the greatest, as long as you can see even short term hope, it builds. There is a real focus starting to happen in the area of counselling. There is a hope association and to me that is exciting because I think hope is a key. You don't even have to work at the high school level to see kids that have already given up hope academically. If there is anything that scares me, it is the number of little people at the primary level who have given up hope. I have actually had children say to me, "You don't have to worry about teaching me how to read, its not important to me." Well, you know that's not true, but the fact that a little person would put that much thought into saying that is frightening. I actually had a little guy in Grade 2 who came up to me the first day of school. All the kids came in and took their desk. They all come in with their school supplies and stuff. He walked right up to me at the front of the room, and he said, "You don't have to worry about teaching me how to read this year." "Oh," I said, "I just want you to know that you don't have to worry about not learning how to read this year. Now you can go and have a seat." It took a while, but he did learn how to read. He was still mid-Grade 1 by the end of Grade 2. We had to do some battles, you know, just to get down to doing some work. A key turning point with that child came when we finally got through the mid-Grade 1 diagnostic test and I jumped up and did a little hat dance around the chair. He looked at me like I was weird. But you know, from that moment he read anything I gave to him. We didn't have to battle anymore about books. I'll never forget him because I never before had a young child who was so articulate. He obviously put a lot of thought into his opening statement to me. He wanted to take that feeling of responsibility off me.

. . . becoming a teacher.

I think that I am like many women of a similar era. We weren't offered a lot of wide choices in terms of a career. I remember, in Grade 2, I had to write the whole story of what I want to be when I grow up. Being that little girl who likes to please and be correct, I made a choice. I couldn't spell nurse, but I could sort of spell teacher. I remember that I also was a very good biology student and in high school I thought I'd like to do a career along that line. On one of our first career days, we didn't have a lot of that sort of thing offered in those days; there was a presenter who was a health inspector. I thought this might be interesting, because I just loved biology. I remember sitting in his session with my hand up to ask a question. I was one of a few girls in the session and before he even let me ask my question he said, "Women do not go into this field." I just put my hand down and listened to the rest of the session. So, I have mixed feelings on how I came to be a teacher. I also remember as a child, rushing home from school in Grade 3 and 4 and playing school. I loved it. I'd line up all my toys and I was always the teacher instructing them and the dog too. I would teach my friends. I always wanted to be the teacher. So there was always that kind of desire. But how much of it was influenced by growing up in an era of limited career choices for women? I'm sure that

played part. I think on a more intellectual level, my studies in career choices identified stages in decision-making such as maturity stages, life stages. It is the self-concept, at a given time, that really determines the direction and the career that you choose. I can't say that I was totally focused on teaching although the interest in teaching was there. Another significant time was when I went to university in Saskatchewan. You didn't go directly into education, so it really wasn't a choice I even thought about. You did either arts or science. I went into arts and majored in psychology, which was an interest. After you took your degree then you went into education. When I finished my arts degree, I got a summer job in the Psychology Department of the Regina Health Centre, and they trained me to do cognitive testing. I went around to schools the following year to test kids at the Kindergarten and Grade 1 level. We would all get in the car, all these little mini psychologists with our little brief cases, and we would go off to the schools. Right away I thought there is something not right about this. I remember knocking on a teacher's door, taking a child, and then quickly saying a few words to the teacher and thinking, "This isn't right. This isn't the way this should be done." I really enjoyed working with the kids. I thought, "I like these little guys." The following year I went back to university and went into education. My first teaching was Grade 1 and I loved it. I love working with little guys. I love the excitement of teaching reading but also I enjoy the excitement of teaching all the subject areas. A little bit somewhere in the back of me is still that person that likes biology. That's basically how I got started. It wasn't a straightforward road at all.

First Telling (Round 2)
(Responding to an important personal photograph)

. . . experiencing collegiality.

I have chosen to talk about a picture of myself with some of my favourite colleagues from a number of years ago. You know, it's funny, why do you keep a picture? I actually keep this picture in the drawer in my desk, in every desk I've had in Upton, I've had this picture since it was taken, and I didn't write the date on the back but I think it's 1984. This is a crazy group of people from Upton off on a trip to Vancouver. I had just come back to teaching after being an at-home mom and, you know, you kind of wonder about yourself going back into a career. All these kind of crazy ladies and I decided to go off to Vancouver, which is a very exotic thing to do. I had never been on a trip that far from home. It was a PD trip and we all went off to learn about whole language. I remember the whole trip with great detail. We had a room with a view if you stood on one bed and you were tall enough, you could see out the window to the ocean. We stayed at UBC campus. We were young and it was exciting. I think part of that picture, and why it has been there for such a long time, is the collegiality. To me work is sort of like my home away from home. I look at it that way. Now I have another neat little group of people that I chartered with and it is the social part that keeps you going. Another thing is that misery loves miserable company. I think that to be positive you have to be around positive thinking people and that is what got me through my other challenge of chartering. It is building that little group of people that you can count on. I like to be around positive people and I discovered that a long time ago. You can always find people who are looking to sit and be negative and complain, but no, I look for positive people. And even when people are feeling negative, I always like to flip it. I do that to myself mentally all the time. If it is a bad day, I say, "What positive thing did I

get out of today?" And, even if it means I survived today, wow, you know, I can put in a hard day and survive.

First Telling (Round 3)
(Responding to Dr. Seuss and the newspaper)

I have a forever memory of Dr. Seuss's books, because they helped me to survive my first year of teaching. I had thirty-four kids in Grade 1. Twenty of them were not ready for Grade 1. It was like they were hand picked for me because I was the new teacher on staff. What do you do in the days before they even talked about modifying curriculum? So, Dr. Seuss is who rescued me. Rhyme is what those kids needed and I read them every single book that he published in that first year.

. . . experiencing different perceptions.

I have a recent story to tell. It is the perception out there; especially with the press, that is related to the discussions on our 6% increase over two years. I was testing at the Education Clinic on Friday and the lady that was testing across from me didn't have an education background. She came from a clinical background and she usually works with adults. She deals with adults and some very, very serious issues. When you are practicing at the clinic, you get who they refer to you and she got a six-year-old boy. I knew she was in trouble because even with the door closed I could hear this little guy, and he was a really active character. She had to keep giving him breaks and he was up and down the hallway and he stomped on her foot and gave her a kick. He would stop and blow in his mother's ear and the whole bit. Mind you, he was only referred because he was having some problems in dance, according to his mom. He was a problem at school. But the tester was told that she could not contact the school. However, when it was all over and this poor lady dragged herself out of the testing room, she said to me, "I have an absolutely new appreciation for teachers." She said, "I thought I had a tough day on Thursday when I had to do 3 contracts with adults," and she added, "it was nothing like I went through today." And she went on to say, "if you guys go out on strike in the fall to get a little extra money, I'm going to go out and hold a picket sign for one of the teachers at my daughter's school." That was a taste of the public getting a little taste of what we deal with on a daily basis. She was still talking about it the next day when I saw her. The public doesn't have a true perception about teaching. A lot of their perceptions are from their own school years.

Sometimes I wonder if my perception is right, because I went from public school, to University, and then into teaching. I've been in a school forever. So what is the real perception? Maybe I don't have the right perception because I've always been in the inner circle of education and I've never really sat out. It is hard as a parent and teacher to separate those two hats. And so, if my child said something about her day, I knew from a teacher's perspective what that meant and then I had to react from a parent perspective. As a teacher, I sometimes knew that my child was doing lots of learning, even though she didn't say that she was. But to a parent outside the system, when the child comes home and says, "We just played all day," they are going to wonder what that teacher is doing or

not doing. We, on the other hand, might know that we have a teacher who is really talented and able to make the children believe they are playing while they are learning.

Re-Telling as Theming (Round 1)
(Discussing the response to *The Courage to Teach*)

. . . experiencing the unexpected.

The unexpected seems to keep my passion alive. These little blips about the unexpected phone caller, the unexpected comment that a child made I do find exciting. I just had it happen not too long ago when I was testing. You can test and test and the same old answers come along. This one little guy said, ". . . and that's my final answer," a comment taken from the television show. Those things stick in my mind. They just kind of perk me up and make my day. That kind of stood out.

. . . experiencing helping others.

Helping more discouraged kids seems to keep me going too. I'm still not sure why. I must somehow identify with these kids. But I'm not sure; I'll have to think about that. I had a very traditional upbringing, but somewhere, something about those kids captures my attention. Maybe it is because I appreciate people who work hard. They have to work harder to get where they have to get rather than everything coming served up on a platter. It is a little like the tortoise and the hare. I like people who just keep plugging along.

. . . experiencing other adults.

I also enjoy my colleagues and the company of other people. Relationships keep me passionate about my work. I really like the adult side of the job. So, it is not just kid focused. I really like working with adults. It is just fun and I like to kid around with people and appreciate people for the little bits of their personality that I really like. When I wake up in the morning it is not just facing the kids that appeals to me, it is also the catching up with what everyone else is doing - the adult side of the job.

You have to be a person who enjoys working with people because you are around people all the time. You not only take on 25 kids, you take on 25 sets of parents and that is a lot of people. Certainly in my role now, I deal with a lot people. You get your fill of talking to people in an 8-hour day. I enjoy that and I enjoy the different experiences different people bring to you. I think I would find a job like an accountant, where you are just sitting and punching numbers, unappealing. We all have times we just want to work alone. It is not like you want a crowd dancing through your office all day long, but I do like that people connection.

Re-Telling as Theming (Round 2)
(Discussing the response to an important personal photograph)

. . . experiencing the positive.

Teaching is a very isolated job and you have to seek out the social part. Otherwise, you can go through a career locked in a classroom. Even though you are with 25 children, it is still very isolated professionally unless you seek out being with others. I think if you allow yourself to get isolated like that, it makes for a long, lonely career. You have no one to share all the neat stories and excitement about new things with. I think there are two levels in teaching. There is the level with the adults. It is a funny kind of profession because where else can you feel sometimes lonely and isolated with 25 little people around you. So you have to balance it. You need that adult connection; at least I needed that, to keep going. And then there is the kid level. It is a different kind of connection, because it is a different kind of relationship.

Positive people are very busy people too and yet they know that somehow that for your own wellness you need to make connections and the time for a good laugh that makes you feel so great. At our last district PD we went to the session on humour. It was wonderful, we just laughed and laughed, and it felt so great. A physical change happens to you when you laugh. That is what is always so special about this school. No matter how difficult it gets, somehow we can flip it into a joke or a laugh.

Re-Telling as Theming (Round 3)
(Discussing the response to Dr. Seuss and the newspaper)

. . . experiencing conflict.

My passion for teaching rekindles whenever I have an experience that involves helping children rather than meeting outside regulations that require me to do an act of teaching in a certain way. The ongoing question, as an educator, is how do I deal with this conflict and stay positive for kids? Sometimes just experiencing a conflict is enough for me to learn from and to take away more information to bring about positive change for children. The last time I worked in Alexander was a recent example of the ever present conflict for me. I know that the testing of students had to be done to qualify them for funding to assist the many needs these children have. At the same time, I know that the actual testing situation was not set up to be "kid friendly" or at best to be truly respectful of their feelings or wishes. How do I turn three hours of a testing situation into some small positive that at least allows the child to cling to whatever dignity and respect he has left in such a controlled situation? Perhaps it is the same challenge I faced each new school year when I had children enter my classroom who do not all want to be there, who didn't have a choice? Everyone wants and desires to feel that they have control in their lives. Perhaps the greatest challenge of teaching, is to give that gift, that sense of knowing in a child that they have control. While, at the same time providing the security of knowing there is someone to help.

I also reflect on the Upton stories, like the Christmas concert at the arena that went badly, and the Polsky dance troupe "experience." These episodes teach us and our students that although experiences can be difficult, we learn from them, take away the

humour from each incident, learn to laugh at your own mistakes and move on, trying not to make the same mistakes twice.

Re-Telling Meta-Narratively (Round 1)
(Discussing the responses to *The Courage to Teach*)

The concept of the gambler is an interesting one. The random reinforcement that Jane sought in her first story is two fold. She looked for the recognition that she made a difference. As well, she sought a personal understanding that what she was doing, teaching, was a significant contribution to a child's life. She observed that it wasn't so much her planning and presentation that made the difference. It was something random about reaching the child in her story. She had no way of knowing that the "spelling bee" was going to engage that particular child. The resulting recognition was impactful as a piece of memory that has lasted 20 years. The work that Jane did with this student in reading and her celebration of his success shows that she wanted to be involved in the success that the child attained.

Jane's observations about her choice to enter the teaching profession are interesting. The decision seems to have been as random as the reinforcement she addressed in her first story. Circumstances, being in the right place at the right time, are acknowledged as reasons for her choice to go into teaching. Behind that choice, however, lived an interest in taking charge. Jane liked to be the one in charge of her dolls and her dog. She enjoyed being a leader and making choices for them. Along with this interest in power, Jane genuinely liked the "little guys." The third component was a sense of doing what was right to do. She brought her interest in psychology, her experience of drop-in testing, her wish to be a leader, and her affection for the younger children into a decision to teach.

A reflection on the transcript in the second telling confirms that Jane enjoys a little of the unexpected reinforcement. The thought that she might be recognized at any time for the work she does excites her and keeps her going during the down times. She always has something to look forward to. Clearly, Jane has experienced many positive and seemingly unexpected acknowledgements of her dedication and skill and she continues to look forward to more of the same.

Relationships with adults also play a part in Jane's continued pursuit of random reinforcement. She enjoys being with adults, both colleagues and other significant adults, in the education world. The relationships help to sustain her as she carries on in teaching. More than that, she depends on those relationships to keep her interested and supported.

There is much unsaid in Jane's dialogue. She does not share her family history, with the exception of her teacher role-playing as a child. She does not speak of her existing family. Jane keeps her disclosures close to the classroom experience at this point.

Re-Telling Meta-Narratively (Round 2)
(Discussing the response to an important personal photograph)

A key signifier in this conversation is the self and others. Jane devotes considerable discussion to the importance of socializing within the context of teaching and the school. The features of socializing that are developed are the need to have fun, to share, to avoid the isolation and loneliness of the job, and to support. There is a clear separation of two sets of others - students and colleagues. The relationship with adult others is seen as opportunity to remain positive. Jane avoids long term involvement with those people who seek miserable company. "Little" groups of friends and colleagues seem to provide a reason to be in the school. It is interesting that the 25 student others in

the classroom and their corresponding parents contribute to a sense of being lonely in an isolating job. Jane needs to feel positive about her daily experiences and she has crafted a ritual where she seeks the redeeming feature of even her worst days. Survival is sometimes the redeeming feature.

Re-Telling Meta-Narratively (Round 3)
(Discussing the response to Dr. Seuss and the newspaper)

Jane has a creative touch that allows her to assess a situation and seek a natural response to what she finds. Her non-reading Grade 1s were well served by her creativity in finding the appropriate rhyming activities to enhance their learning. Jane is not bound by the curriculum, and she is influenced by the presenting need. She is not afraid to use "out of the box" thinking. Her second story about the student tester from the Clinic shows us Jane's pride in her ability to meet the broad spectrum of needs that teaching requires her to address. As well, the tester's comments recognize Jane for her abilities as a representative of the teachers that the tester speaks so highly of.

Jane recognizes in her testing situations and even in her classroom that power does not rest in the hands of her students. She struggles with the need to keep her students' dignity in tact when the situation claims the control they might otherwise have had. Being in control appears to be a concern for Jane. As a tester she sees herself as "other" to her students whose sense of self might well be damaged by the process or the outcome of testing.

This concern about power and control for her children may well come from her own childhood experiences. She may have enjoyed being privileged as a child or she may have been very much under the control of an "other" who had greater power. Either way, today, Jane is cautious in her approach with children because she values the ability

for them, and probably herself, to make their own decisions with help and support as necessary.

The teaching situation gives Jane the opportunity to use the creative skills she has. As well, she is able to construct voice for her children and, in turn, for herself. She wrestles with the voice of public and government pressure to conform to curriculum and social understanding of what a teacher is. In doing so, she is able to privilege her own voice in the classroom and gain power over the situation. Interesting that one of the ways she seeks and finds voice and power is in the giving of voice and power to her children. This interesting choice is one of the reasons that Jane is the passionate teacher that so many love and appreciate.

My Understanding of Jane

Important to Jane are relationships, recognition, and creative challenge. Central to her need is the signifier power through voice. Jane works very hard to maintain control of her environment and evidence of that power and control is her voice. Within her understanding of her own need, she hears the need of her children to have voice. This would also be true of her colleagues and her family. Jane is currently a special education teacher and a counsellor in her school. She works closely with administration, parents, and students. Jane is in a position to create her own environment where she can coach children on the ways and means of empowering themselves. The situation is ideal for her and it will go a long way in keeping her passionate as a teacher.

Chapter 10: Experiencing Frank

His heroes are soccer heroes, his successes are measured by soccer standards and his teaching strategies reflect the kind of inter-linking relationships that soccer requires in order to be a winning team. (Mary)

Frank is in his mid-thirties and he has taught for eleven years. His wife is his high school sweetheart and they have no children. They were both raised and now live in the same community in which Frank teaches. Frank and his wife have long-term career goals that do not, at this time, include a family. Sports and outdoor pursuits play a big role in their lives at the moment, as do travel and entertainment.

First Telling (Round 1)
(Responding to *The Courage to Teach*)

. . . experiencing self and other

I think some of the greatest impacts we have on kids are the things that we don't plan for. It is all those little intangibles. We don't expect them to understand that, they take things away from us just from our having been with them. It could be something as silly as dressing up for Halloween and that may be the thing they remember about us. It may not be all of the hours we spent teaching math or language arts. It might be something simpler that has an impact on them that they remember.

The key word that strikes me in a passage from *The Courage to Teach* is relationship. That is what teaching is. It is people, young and older kids, interacting with one another and with what you teach. You have to develop a relationship with thirty kids and that can be quite difficult. You will get more from kids if that relationship is good.

I like the kids who are more of a challenge. There is energy there. It is sometimes untapped and sometimes it is easy to tap. I like the energy those difficult boys bring. I have one in my class this year. He is a fantastic kid, but always ready to go. He has been very manageable for me. I haven't let him do anything wrong from the very beginning. I was very hard on him to begin with, but now that I know him and he knows me, I can loosen up a little bit. He is doing well and I think he is even surprising himself. He even corrects himself now, to stop yelling out. He always wants to contribute and he has great ideas, but he also has to respect other people as well. He has been working on self motivation which I think is more important than my telling him every time he is talking out of turn. He is checking himself, and that, to me, is improvement, and that is learning. I listened to him and that is the key. I will not tell a kid to go and sit down if he or she

comes up to tell me something. If a child has taken the time and effort to come up to me and say something, I have to validate that and I will take the time to listen. I believe I have to do this, because if I shut them down they are not going to come back. They will become kids who say, "No way." They won't come and talk and that comes back to building a relationship of trust and I think that is very important. With a class of 30, there are some days as I think back that there are five kids that I really didn't talk to. I didn't get a chance to say, "How was your day, how was your night, what did you do?" I think it's really important that they know that I care about them or that I am at least interested in them. That is going to build up trust later on too.

. . . experiencing curriculum.

I think every student has success in different ways. Some students might not be academic and probably their success is attained through other means at school. He might excel at some of the life skills like dealing with people and learning how to cope. That could be his success that will play an important, a larger factor, in his life later on than a math lesson. The student who excels at life skills might find that more valuable in life than math.

. . . experiencing change.

I transferred from my last school because I knew things about the families that had no bearing on the classroom. I just thought that maybe it was time to enter a classroom and not have any of these prejudgments based on what I knew. I thought that it was a healthy thing and a necessary thing for me to do. I was feeling that having stayed in a community a long time, I knew things that I didn't really need to know.

. . . experiencing becoming a teacher.

I don't think there was a defining moment at one point in time that said I was going to be a teacher. Throughout all of my schooling, probably until Grade 12, I had not considered education as a career choice. I went into education because I didn't know what else to do. However, I did like kids and I did like interacting with kids. My first desire was to teach Phys. Ed. And thank goodness for that first round observation practicum. I went into a Grade 9 classroom and knew this was not for me. I knew that my interest was at the other end of the spectrum in a Grade 2 classroom. I thought that Grade 2 was pretty neat. So, to follow-up that experience and to make sure the decision was right, I sought employment working with kids. I spent a summer working in day care and I spent three summers working with youth in summer camps with Community Services in Fort Saskatchewan. I ended up working with a lot of severely handicapped teenagers. That was a treat and I think it was then, working with the kids in that capacity that I realized that this was something that I could do and that I would like to do. These kids are neat and they are passionate about the oddest things. Their passion, their energy, and the things they say and do, are contagious if you are receptive to them. I thought that working with kids was something I really wanted to do because I thought I could have a positive impact on their lives and I thought it was fun.

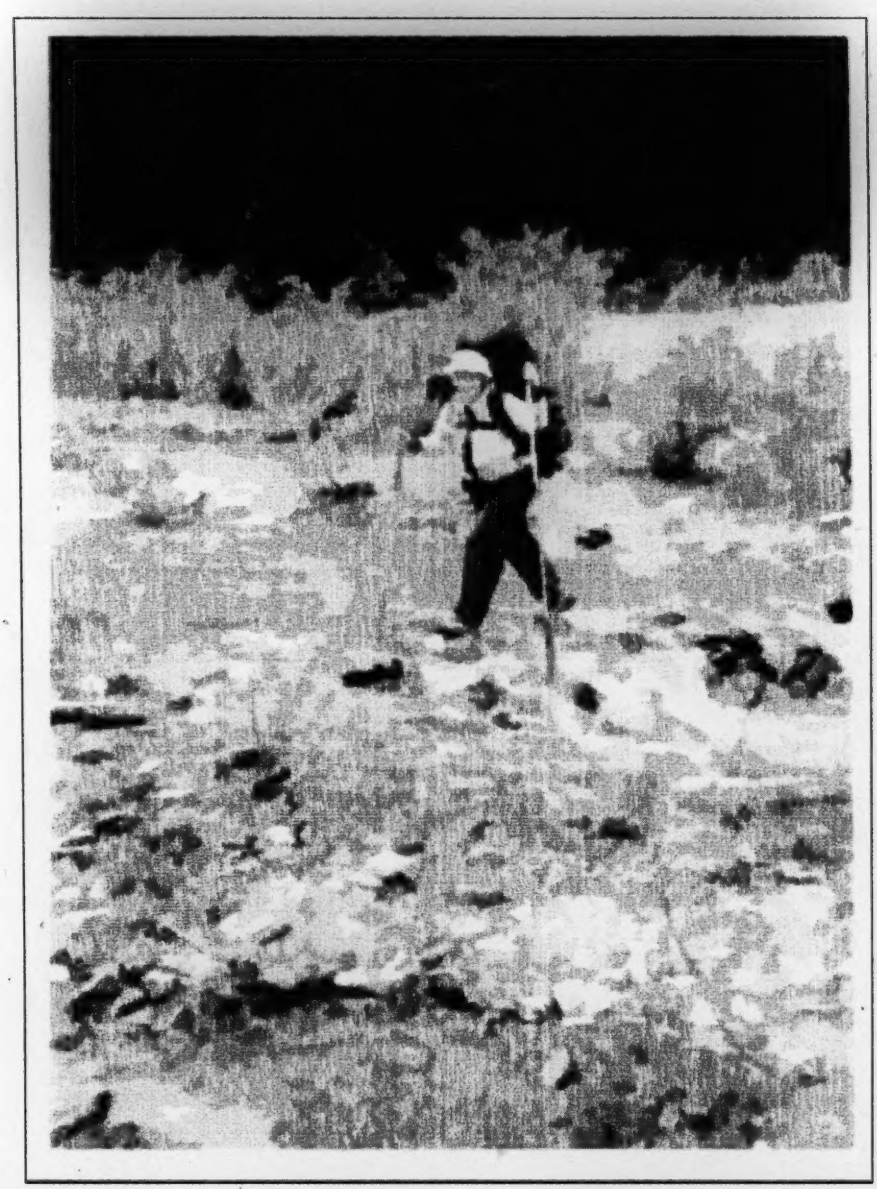
In day care I worked with kids that were six to eight years old. Being a male it was extremely odd for me to be working there – there were no other males and I formed a really neat bond with this little fellow who came from a broken home. He didn't have any male influence in his life and I spent a lot of time with him. He moved to another area of the city and I ran into him when we were on a field trip. When he spotted me he came running across the field, all tears and big hugs. Things like that you just can't measure. That was the first realization that I could have a real impact on someone and I realized that I wanted to do that.

The timing of this student encounter was important because I was on the verge of changing from secondary to elementary education. Now with more experience in teaching I think I could move to the older children. I don't think I could have handled that, the older students, to begin with.

I remember reading a statistic about *Happy Days*. When Fonzie made a remark about having a library card and reading, the next week there were hundreds of millions of new library cards issued across the United States. The possibilities and ways that kids can be impacted are just amazing.

First Telling (Round 2)
(Responding to an important personal photograph)

. . . experiencing adventure



We went hiking this past summer at Fryat Valley, just up from Athabasca Falls. It was a 50-kilometer hike and my wife Sherry was extremely apprehensive about crossing the streams. There was a bridge of deadfall six or seven feet above the water and it was probably 12 feet across. I never even thought of it - I crossed it. I stood in the middle, she took the end of my walking stick, and I held it and backed up. She didn't sleep that night because we had to come back the same way and she had to cross that stream again. It was something that she didn't think she would be able to do. I thought she could do it, but I didn't want to nag or push because that would not have been successful. I was proud of her. She was able to do it, and she stuck with it without

complaint. She made up her mind to do it and she did it. It was actually enjoyable for her. It was hard work, enjoyable and rewarding.

That was July 9th, this past summer. After the hike we went to the Jasper Aquatic Centre. We had been four days without a shower. On this trip, Sherry carried most of the food, so the last night before we left, we had to finish it all off. So four packets of Ichiban later and a big bag of dried apricots we learned that we should not have eaten all the apricots. As I was being forced out of the tent, it is not a big space, we saw fresh bear droppings and a porcupine. We had picked a camp ground right in a meadow with fruit bearing bushes that were not in bloom yet. So I didn't sleep too well that night. It was a designated camp ground, so when we came to it after back packing seven kilometres, what do you do? So, you pitch a tent as close to the river and as far away from the bushes as possible. You can't hear anything with the roaring river. It was at the base of a big waterfall.

Next summer we are going to do another hike to Skyline. There, you are right at the top of the hill and you overlook two mountain ranges. You look back on Marmot. You are actually above Marmot looking across the mountain range.

Re-Telling as Theming (Round 1)
(Discussing the response to *The Courage to Teach*)

. . . experiencing a passion.

There are two pictures that are especially important to me. There is a picture of me and one of Bobby Orr. He was my hero as a kid growing up - Bobby Orr and the Boston Bruins. The other picture is of my passion - soccer. I love that game and I think in many ways that saved me. I started playing very competitive soccer at a time in my life when it could have gone either way. Soccer brought a whole new aspect, a whole dimension of discipline and structure to my life that I think I needed to be exposed to. When you are playing one of the top thirty-six players out of the country, you have to be fit, and you can't drink, you can't smoke - you can't do drugs. You just have to live and breathe soccer and that is what I did at that time. I think if I hadn't had that, who knows what would have happened. I could probably have been led other ways. I've learned a lot from that game. The guys that I play soccer with and I talk about. Things in my life always change, but there is always that connection with the boys after the game and there is always the game. I go and play soccer, no matter what is going on in my life. The minute I step on the field everything of concern is gone. That is why I play. I'm good at it too. So, we seek out things that we do well.

. . . experiencing connections.

I believe strongly in being there for the kids. I think it is imperative that they see me as a person and they see different aspects of me too. My wife Sherry comes into the classroom a couple of times a year. She likes to visit and I like to have her in just so they can see that I have a family and that I am a person too. It is important for them to see me

as a real person. Sometimes when I am up at the front of my class and when I come down hard on a few of them, they need to see that I am a person too. I know they remember Sherry's visits because they ask me periodically how she is. They know her now and I think that connection is really important.

There was an interesting article in the *Edmonton Journal* on the weekend about the ten primary questions impacting life today. One of the topics that I found interesting was the concept of 24 - 7, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The article addressed the way our society has changed. It talked about information overload and the fact that people are working now more than ever. I found it interesting that, according to *Popular Mechanics*, we are supposed to have fun with wonderful things like technology. However, instead of deleting work, technology has actually created work. People are busier than ever and everything is on the go all the time. The article talked about burnout. I think you have to recognize that the key in life is balance. If I don't have balance in my life, I'm ineffective in the classroom. There are days when I just leave the work - I leave it, I have to. If I don't get that story marked for tomorrow - so what. It is not going to kill me, and it is certainly not going to kill the kids. Going home and taking the night off has a profound effect the next day on those kids. The catch is that if I get behind in the marking it can cause burn out. It is a balancing act and you have to prioritize what is key and what is not. There are times that you just have to "file 13" some of the work and clear your desk. That's just life - and if students ask what happened to that assignment, I tell them that I don't know. One assignment isn't really going to change their mark.

In the end, balance is important. I get a connection from soccer that helps keep the balance. Soccer says to me, I'm not going to lose and nothing can beat me. I am a quiet person, but there is strength there all the same. No one will beat me. When push comes to shove, I won't quit. You have to be tenacious and you can't give up. Some of the cases you have with kids are difficult, but it is important not to give up on them even though you want to sometimes. They really try you and push you as far as they can, but then there are days that you think they are worth saving. Ultimately I believe that. I haven't met a kid yet that, one on one, I did not like. There are behaviours that drive me nuts but the kid at the core is a person. Some kids take a number of different ways to peel away their protective layers to get to the person, but once you get there, it is worth the effort. It is hard work, but what isn't hard work? You could be an accountant, or a lawyer - it is all hard work. It is just different work. The pace of the work of teaching is go, go, go. From the moment I enter the classroom and when the kids come in, until the moment they leave, it's go time. I like that. The day goes by fast. There are some days that I wish I could just come in, close the door, and not be bothered, but that is not what I chose when I went into teaching. There are other days, ninety percent of the time, that I enjoy the fast pace. Otherwise, I wouldn't do it. I like doing activities with the kids. I think that's important. I do the intramurals for the most part at the school. One of the games we play is similar to murder ball. I like playing with the kids. I told my wife Sherry last week that I am undefeated. I enjoy playing with the kids and they think it is really great that I do. This week, this little girl, tagged me out of the game. I didn't see her coming; she's just this little mite of a thing. She threw the ball and got me. She was

so pleased with herself. As I said earlier, that is something she will remember - something as silly as me playing a competitive game as an equal where she could win.

Re-Telling as Theming (Round 2)
(Discussing the response to an important personal photograph)

. . . experiencing balance.

I think balance is important. It is like anything in life, you can't over indulge in one area while other areas tend to falter. You burn yourself out that way. The summer is very important to do something that creates balance. This year Sherry has the whole summer off with me, so it should be interesting. We have lots of projects to do at home.

. . . experiencing being me.

Although I am considered to be a quiet person, I'm not afraid to speak when I have something to say that is insightful. If I don't have something to say, I'm not going to say something just to hear my own voice. If I have a contribution to make, I make it and if I don't, I say nothing. I'm conscious of what I'm going to say. I don't want something to come and bite me later. If I say something I mean it and if I tell you I'm going to do something, I will do it. I don't want to make a promise or a commitment that I can't keep.

I am the only male on a staff of fifteen primary teachers. Male teachers tend to go to the junior high or high school route. I think the shortage of male applicants is partially a political thing too. My cousin teaches senior high physics and math. He has done that for the past 20 years and he loves it. He was teaching the IB program in physics and these past two years he has been teaching athletics and running special programs where he teaches all year long. His programs attract the hockey players, skiers, and sports minded kinds of kids.

Re-Telling Meta-Narratively (Round 1)
(Discussing the responses to *The Courage to Teach*)

A key signifier in Frank's dialogue is relationship. He agonizes over the pressure to create relationship with his students. His gives an example of his valuing of relationship when he speaks of the child who wants to talk with him. He recounts his responsibility to listen so that damage is not done to that relationship. He worries as he recognizes that in a given day he may have missed listening to a number of his students in a class of thirty relationships. Frank is living the scenario of self and other. He finds

importance in thirty individual self and other relationships within his classroom. He recognizes how difficult this is to accomplish, but he peruses those partnerships.

Another signifier is recognition. Frank needs to know that what he does is important enough to be recognized by his students later in life. Although the academic curriculum is important, Frank gives more value to the interpersonal portion of his classroom day. He believes he is building, in his students, and especially in the most needy of his "energetic boys," the ability to motivate themselves to improve through the relationships he develops with them.

Frank moves back and forth between the pronouns I and you in his descriptions. He uses "I" when he is contemplating what was and he uses "you" when he describes what should or could be. For example, in his description of soccer he says,

> Soccer brought a whole new aspect, a whole dimension of discipline and structure to my life that I think I needed to be exposed to. When you are playing one of the top thirty-six players out of the country, you have to be fit, and you can't drink, you can't smoke - you can't do drugs. You just have to live and breathe soccer and that is what I did at that time. If I hadn't had that, who knows what would have happened. I could probably have been led other ways. I've learned a lot from that game.

When he moves beyond the description of his experience, it is as though he is standing back from himself and giving instructions like a parent would to a child. It is more than a mere grammatical slip in conversation; it is, perhaps, the presence of his inner voice that provides him ongoing guidance in his decision-making. This dual discourse blends what is and what might be together in this telling. Add to the mix, his references to the past and we have memory exposing discourse that pushes the boundaries of past, present, and future. This is a post-modern reconstruction as Frank speaks. He constructs the memory as I. He deconstructs the situation through that inner

voice that instructs his decisions and reconstructs what might be if the instructions are heard. From the past perspective that is "I," the future is told by "you."

Frank views soccer as an extremely important element of his life. He values the relationships with his soccer peers. When balance in his life is required, he turns to soccer to provide the social structure and the model for living. Competition is a piece of the puzzle. Frank needs to win, not to be beaten. At the same time as he values his student relationships as he does his soccer relationships, he imposes the competitive sports model on his life as a teacher. There is an element of confrontation that is implied in this thinking. The question is who would beat him in the classroom. He takes pride in allowing his students the opportunity to win; yet he feels the pressure of a potential loss in his professional life. Frank is afraid that he might not be able to do the job and that he will be criticized for that inability. He refers to teaching as something he could do. This implies that there are things that he could not do. Even though he enjoys his relationships with students and he has chosen a field of work that he believes he can do, he suffers from feelings of inadequacy as a teacher. He didn't think he could manage the older students where his keen sports interest might have been best placed. Instead, he is more comfortable with younger learners.

Re-Telling Meta-Narratively (Round 2)
(Discussing the responses to an important personal photograph)

Frank likes a challenge and a little danger. He enjoys being the leader and his back packing trip is a place where he is able to lead. Even in recreation he enjoys the position of teacher. Frank represents himself as a competent hiker who is able to share his confidence and competence with those who have yet to learn. In this case the learner is his wife who needs his encouragement to overcome her fear of crossing the stream. In

the classroom the same scenario exists. Frank develops relationships with his students and encourages their confidence in themselves. It is interesting that Frank felt that he could teach younger children. He did not feel confident to teach the older students in junior high.

Frank describes himself as a quiet man who speaks only when it is of value to do so. He observes himself as one of the few male teachers in primary education. He also describes himself as a soccer player who enjoys the field of competition and the order of the rules of sport. Frank fashions his classroom world on the sports model of team and fair competition. So, what drives the passion for teaching in Frank? He is a man who finds confidence in order and the world of teaching provides a concrete order. He seeks the power of the teacher/coach role and the structure of the primary classroom where he is clearly older and wiser than his young students. He is in charge of providing coach-like leadership where he shares his strength with the children. Frank was not comfortable with the older students when he first began teaching. It could be speculated that there was not enough age difference for Frank to feel the power of leadership with junior high students. The key signatures of Frank's passion are order and power. He needs relationship to construct order in his classroom and in his life and recognition to confirm the power of his leadership. Frank also wrestles with "otherness," both external and internal. The reflective field of teaching requires that practice be reflective and Frank grows and develops as a person himself through this metacognative practice. Even in his text, his inner voice of courage and direction is present in the grammar of "I" and "you." He guides himself and others to be successful through this quiet grammatical voice. Frank's need for team relationship honours his students with the opportunity to have a

positive relationship with a man who is compelled to guide and direct their learning through the positive use of power. Frank was not forthcoming with stories of his personal life beyond his students and his wife. The unsaid, of course, can be interpreted in a variety of ways. However, what is clear is that he developed a need for order and a wish to be in control.

My Understanding of Frank

Frank has constructed boundaries for himself that grow out of the sport that he has found success and companionship within. Soccer is a place where he feels secure, challenged, and comfortable. The rules that enable the game represent a key signifier for Frank. His heroes are soccer heroes, his successes are measured by soccer standards, and his teaching strategies reflect the kind or inter-linking relationships that soccer requires in order to be a winning team.

Dialogue about Frank's background and personal information was not forthcoming. He deflected much of the discussion away from himself even through the use of "you" vs. "I" when referencing self. However, he did reveal that he is at some times his own coach as "you" instructs "I." Again, Frank has found comfort in the kind of relationships with self and others that are found in a sport - soccer. He has chosen to teach younger children because of the comfort level he feels with them. It is important that he is able to be the children's coach and therefore he needs to feel that his life and teaching experience put him in a position to lead as a coach would lead. Frank has talked about perhaps teaching junior high students further along in his career. This would be a very important decision where Frank would need to feel that his students would accept his prowess as a sports person and a coach. Frank's power comes from his ability to

impact students' lives as though they were players needing his expert guidance. As long as this is intact, it is likely that Frank will continue to excel as a teacher. It is also true that Frank himself needs a coach. That coach could be another teacher or an administrator, a colleague, a parent or a friend. The model of encouraging his own wife in her outdoor pursuits is the same model he needs for himself. Ongoing encouragement from someone he respects as a coach will keep him on track.

Chapter 11: Experiencing Jo

Jo fights to live the interconnectedness of self and other. (Mary)

Jo is in her early fifties and she is married to a teacher. They have no children, but they are very much involved with the children in their extended family. Jo spends much of her time with her husband and the many friends they have developed over the years. They enjoy traveling and they particularly enjoy Victoria, BC. A graduate of a girls' school, Jo stands up for women's rights and encourages her students and staff to do so as well. She has taught primary school for most of her 25 years of teaching with a short time in junior high school.

First Telling (Round 1)
(Responding to *The Courage to Teach*)

. . . experiencing being remembered

Those little reinforcements that come to you ten to fifteen years later are important. I'm just thinking of a phone call from a student that I taught in Grade 1 who is now working. She recognized my name on a letter and she called to say, "Do you remember when I was in your Grade 1 class? There was a time that I was being bullied, but you were there and helped me through that situation." I think those little unexpected incidents, those impacts you had many years ago, come back to make you say, "I could keep doing this." This is important to me.

. . . experiencing becoming a teacher

I remember being in Grade 12 and talking to people about what to do for the rest of my life. I left high school with the idea of becoming a social worker. After a Bachelor of Arts, I took a job as a social worker and worked for a year at it. I became very ill with migraine headaches. There didn't seem to be any hope and no opportunity to make decisions that could really help people.

I went traveling for a bit, came back and did various types of project jobs working with teenagers. I really liked the work, so I took a Bachelor of Education program. I have had excellent experiences with teaching and I have been here ever since.

There are periods in your life when you are not as good as you were other times. I'm thinking of a time when I taught in a particular school, in a particular class, just after

coming out of university. I thought I could do anything. I could combine Language Arts and Social Studies and do novel study and teach this wonderful way. I found out that some things don't work. I thought that you could be creative as a teacher. I found out what junior highs disliked most was the challenge to think and look at things and learn in a different way. They just liked colouring maps, routine, and workbook pages. I wonder if I had been at a breaking point what would have happened. I still think I would try the creative approach with junior highs again given a different situation. If things hadn't worked on a continual basis for a few years, would I have been that marginal teacher instead of being here talking as a passionate teacher?

First Telling (Round 2)
(Responding to an important personal photograph)

. . . experiencing children

Because we are talking about education, I had to share a picture with you from our recent trip to the Cook Islands. On either side of a school zone in the Cook Islands there would be this wonderful sign saying, "Watch that child." I thought, "I have to have a picture of that sign." We have school zones and we have children at play, but the words on this sign really caught my interest. I was just thinking about the importance of children in the Cook Islands. Children seem to be really respected, well taken care of.

The story that I heard while visiting the island is that the island is a stop over for many sailors, so there could be many step-brothers and sisters and fathers who live elsewhere. There is no bigger story to this telling. I just thought it was interesting. Children seem to be an important part of Cook Island society. There were children on our boat trip. The owner of the boat included his sister on the trip and her children were very much a part of the tour. There were other little toddlers running around who were the stepchildren of the woman's brother. Children seem to be very much a part of family life. I attended several church services and children were part of the church service, part of the scene. There were little guys, three and up, singing in Mowery and singing the English verses of the hymns with the entire congregation. It is not so much children at play - it is children being involved. "Watch that child," seemed to say it is your responsibility to be part of it - that is what it says to me. You can't just have kids out there playing. We are a part of the kids. Maybe I'm making more of it than it is, but I think it would be great to have this sign blown up and placed in the hallways of schools. "Watch that child."

. . . experiencing memories

I have a picture of Henry and a family friend on the beach at Tofino. This is an important place for relaxation, rejuvenation, and connection to family and friends. I think this was one of the first trips that Henry and I took was with our nephew who was six years old. It's a memory picture. Because we have traveled there so often, there is more than one memory. Tofino is not just a beautiful place of relaxation; it is the happy memories of spending a longer period of time than a weekend being with my husband and family. This is the place where we took a young nephew and taught him things about camping and feminism, because he had to do dishes. This is a place we went to with our university friends before they had children and then with their children when they were babies. On our most recent trip, one of the boys is a teenager and one is 20 and in first year university. They still felt good about going camping with us and sharing time, no longer as children, but as adults. Tofino is a special place of beauty and calm. If you haven't been there you must go. It is a wonderful place for children and adults.

Re-Telling as Theming (Round 1)
(Discussing the response to *The Courage to Teach*)

. . . experiencing connections

I like the word compassion because I think there is an emotional connection that is very much a part of what drives me. Emotion is connected to the first little story about a young woman calling about her experiences in Grade 1. It was her making that connection to me ten, fifteen years later, that was important. I recall her telling the story of what it was like to be bullied and how she felt so positive that there was someone there who could help and intervene in the situation.

I cannot connect with the word passionate. I can connect with compassionate. Maybe it is because passionate, to me, is fervent and heated. I like to listen and just think. The human side, the connection to other people, building relationships, that to me

becomes part of compassion. Connection and relationship are a very big part of what I do, what is important, and what sustains me in this profession. It is the connecting, the building relationships, and the caring about people and young people. I consider what life is going to be like for them. Part of being passionate/compassionate about teaching is loving to learn. I think that drives me along with trying to understand people. Asking questions, I think, is more important to me than giving answers.

Re-Telling as Theming (Round 2)
(Discussing the response to an important personal photograph)

What really strikes me in both pictures that I brought to share with you is that their stories included children, family, and connection. Even in the story of the children at Cook Island, I focused on the importance of the connection to children. It is important to take responsibility when you decide to choose a profession like teaching. That picture of "Watch that Child" really stuck with me and I'm not sure why it had such an impact. When we decide to go into this profession, teaching, arguments with parents, and grand parents harping at you aside, the work that we do is really about the kids.

My tearful and emotional response to this discussion describes the way I feel. Kids are important. I think the emotion shows the passion. The work that I have chosen to do, the fights I have fought and continue to fight, the fatigue, is about making sure that kids are treated with respect. I once worked with a principal who I didn't feel treated children with due care, consideration, and respect. It bothered me very much. It is care as much as respect, and care and respect are tied together.

I wonder if my mother's death when I was 18 caused me to go in a certain direction. I can't remember teaching being something I had decided to do when I was ten. I was always good at taking care of children. But, when I was young, I was not going to have children - that wasn't a need. So, why have I chosen this avenue of dedication to children? It is interesting that in the two pictures chosen, the children come out.

I think the interconnectedness is key. Parents bring their children into the world, but they are not just their responsibility. I really believe that as a society we are responsible for all of the children in the world. If we don't have our own children, part of it (the reason) is to take care of one another. I think that is part of my passion. I really believe that we are caretakers of the people in the world.

Re-Telling Meta-Narratively (Round 1)
(Discussing the responses to *The Courage to Teach*)

Key concepts for Jo are recognition and hopefulness. Jo finds reassurance in the recognition given to her by a former student that she was able to protect and support as a child who was being bullied. The work needs to be meaningful to Jo. She needs to feel

that she can "make a difference." She found that social work, although important, did not provide the measure of improvement for a child's life that teaching did. She refers to hope as a component that was not available to her through social work and a component that was present in teaching.

Control over the lives of children rests primarily in two places, the home and the school. For Jo, there is a need to be able to control outcomes and the home, foster home scenario seemed hopeless, where the school provided opportunity to see hopeful change. Power and control are so often seen as negative concepts; however, in the case of this passionate teacher, her need for power and control is vested in making the lives of children more to her liking. Her vision for children includes safety and fair treatment.

In her second telling, Jo became quite emotional in the discussion of her need to connect, to establish relationship, and to impact the lives of her students. A major signifier in her practice is relationship with others.

Re-Telling Meta-Narratively (Round 2)
(Discussing the responses to an important personal photograph)

Relationship continues to be a strong signifier in Jo's story. Otherness is also very much present. Jo struggles to find the place of children as other in her life experience. She views children as needing protection, as she mentions bullying on several occasions. They are seen as family and as members and non-members of the greater society. In the Cook Islands, Jo refers to children who are actively included rather than indulged when she refers to them not merely being watched at play. Jo's nephews are an important part of her family structure and she revels in the fact that they continue enjoying camping with her from childhood to adulthood. To Jo, children are family, responsible and respected members of society, vulnerable to social influence and

in need of advocacy and protection. Her observation as a social worker is that children are sometimes excluded from family, viewed as having no value to society, not respected by some others, sometimes including their own family members, and in need of their own protective resources. As a teacher, Jo prides herself as a mentor and protector of children.

As a result of Jo's need to care for and respect children, she becomes protective to the point of doing battle on their behalf. She refers to the fatigue associated with fighting certain elements that she feels are not positive for her students. It is interesting that Jo chooses compassion over passion as a concept for her description of the quiet, listening self, yet she chooses a heated word like fighting when it comes to defending her view of children's rights to care and respect. There is a point where Jo's advocacy for children's rights moves into the sphere of activism as she promotes her worldview that all adults are responsible for the world's children. She acknowledges that parents are privileged, yet the raising of their children is a matter for the whole society and not merely restricted to the family unit. In this way, Jo fights to live the interconnectedness of self and other.

Jo questions the source of her decision to become an advocate for children. She wonders if losing her mother at 18 years of age might have had something to do with it. She was not the child who wanted to be a mother or a teacher as she grew up, yet she finds herself passionate/compassionate about the support and nurturing of children. It could be speculated that Jo felt the loss of childhood herself, when she lost her own mother. Now, lacking an important child/adult relationship, she may well seek to organize the place where she has no control. Jo does not seem to seek the mother role

with her students, but she certainly provides a protective environment that is bordered by her concept of the respected and cared for child.

The relationship signifier remains central to Jo who seeks safety and respect for her children and who seeks control and hopefulness for herself. Whether or not her mother's death contributed to feelings of loss of control in Jo's life, the result of her life experience is that she wishes to keep control of her students' lives in a most positive way. Her worldview of caring and interconnectedness generates daily behaviours from Jo that give opportunity for her students to experience being respected and nurtured.

Feminism is a word that was used in describing Jo's experience with her six-year-old nephew and the Tofino camping experience. It is no mistake that this meaning-ladened word should appear in the midst of Jo's story. It is not overtly mentioned again. However, there are threads of the concept found throughout the tellings. Jo's female student was bullied and in need of her strong support. She lost her mother in her teens, a critical developmental stage for a young woman. Jo resisted the all too easy concept of mother and teacher at a time in history when young girls generally sought "female" roles in life. At the same time, Jo chose a career field that was traditionally a caregiver role in social work and ultimately landed in teaching. She has not had children of her own, yet views herself as a caretaker of all children. Jo's worldview includes feminist concepts, at the very least, from a shared role and respect level.

What makes Jo a passionate/compassionate teacher is her commitment to a strong personal philosophy that enframes her daily activities with students. Jo needs voice for herself and she recognizes that need in children. Her point of view is so strong that she is

willing to do "passionate" battle to defend it while she compassionately supports children's rights to be heard, to be respected, and to be cared for.

My Understanding of Jo

Jo views the world as an interconnected place where each person is, in some way, responsible for "others." She has chosen to be responsible for others as children. She protects them from all manner of unfair treatment, from bullying to gender issues to support and nurturing those who need support and assistance for a variety of reasons. This is also true of her adult relationships. She is seen by her friends and colleagues as a supportive place where deep listening will happen and where support for their given causes exists. It is possible that Jo's will to protect emanates from her need to be protected as a child herself. She lost her mother at a critical time in her youth and spent some time in boarding school. Jo has no biological children, yet she feels a sense of responsibility for all children who cross her path, students, nieces and nephews, the children of her friends. She does not express a will to be mother, or in fact teacher, but protector from her perspective, the keeper of fair treatment. Jo has many children as a result of her point of view where we are all the keepers of our neighbours. In order for her work as a teacher and administrator to be meaningful to her, she needs to be in a position to find children who need support at a variety of levels so that she can craft a support plan. Her energy is sapped when the situation seems hopeless, so it is important that she feels able to make a difference. Like her experience with Social Services, if she ever believes that she cannot make a difference, she is likely to lose her passion for the work.

Chapter 12: Experiencing Mary

They give me voice and I give them dedicated and caring service. (Mary)

First Telling (Round 1)
(Responding to *The Courage to Teach*)

. . . experiencing self doubt

I'm teaching art right now and I am not an artist. I can, however, be inspirational and I can give kids opportunity. I can put techniques in front of them and give them time to play with those things. Yet, every art class I walk into class and I fight for their attention long enough to give them what it is that they need to do. There are 32 kids packed into an art class and clearly at least half of them are there so they do not have to take music or French or some of the other things that they need to do. Well, I think, that's OK because in each of us there is some creativity and so we will carry on and do what we can do. Every day I wheel my cart into class and think to myself, why am I doing this – why did I decide that I could do this art course? And then the first project came in and it is true that a lot of the kids are not putting the effort into it that they could. However, I was absolutely amazed, in spite of all of the squawking and the carrying on and the 32 kids in the classroom, at some of the little jewels of art that came out of them. Now I am not just thinking of what a terrible teacher I am because I could not get them inspired, I am thinking there is some raw talent here – what a terrible teacher I am that I'm not going to be able to take that raw talent and do something with it. So, the answer is always the same, what a terrible teacher I am. If only these kids were fortunate enough to have somebody who really knows something about art to do this with them. And yet, I don't really believe that, I really believe that I try very hard to make a program work for them regardless of whether or not I am an artist. I'll honour their individuality, their creativity and try to give each of them a place to shine. That's my little story.

. . . experiencing being privileged

I remember when my daughter Elizabeth came home from her first day of Kindergarten. I was anxious as a working mom who was not able to go with her go to Kindergarten on the first day. She came home and I said, "Well, how was kindergarten, what was it all like, what was your teacher like?" She said, "Oh mom, my teacher is nice and she is young and beautiful." I thought, "Oh isn't that wonderful." I pictured a lovely young teacher with all her ducklings waddling behind her in the classroom. When I went to meet the teacher evening, she would have been 45 or 50 years old with grey hair. She was a grandma kind of lady. Of course, my daughter's impression of young and beautiful had nothing to do with how old she was. Her perception of young and beautiful was someone she liked, someone who touched her.

On my 50th birthday some friends took me to Sorrentino's for dinner. A student I taught in Grade 9 approached me. He said, "I was just watching you and I have to tell you what an impact you made on my life and what a wonderful sharing and fair teacher you were. We all thought you were so fair and that you tried to make things interesting for us." It is that kind of feedback that you so seldom get as a teacher. It is such an important thing when it comes. I was probably not the best teacher he ever encountered, but it was a good relationship – supportive.

. . . experiencing the demands of being a teacher

I can imagine, somehow, that there are some students who must be thinking how unsupportive I was too. I was listening to the radio on my way here and there was a writer talking about the teacher who asked her where she had copied a poem from that she brought to class. She went to the Principal's office and the Principal asked her where she had copied it from and they sent her home with a note to her parents. She read the poem to her parents and her mother asked her where she had copied it from. She said, "You know, it is funny, you have no idea how close I came to not becoming a writer as a result of that accusation." We (teachers) have such potential to do good work and to do harm. The responsibility is daunting.

I thought I was a good Language Arts teacher when I was in junior high school. I knew what needed to be taught and I could go down that road. After teaching in primary classrooms for two years, I reconsidered my effectiveness in junior high. I felt that I had missed the mark in junior high school teaching and that there were many aspects of primary school that would work for junior high students. I saw a need to develop more fluency in their writing and more fun in their reading – a more primary perspective. I was excited by this notion and when I returned to junior high I tried to dress primary up as junior high and take it into the classroom. I ended up resorting to some of the things I disliked most about teaching in junior high. Classes seemed to be more about sit down, get your book open, and no more talking. I was disappointed and reverted to the approach that I had used in years gone by.

When I was assigned to a primary school I had been teaching in junior high and high school for the past seven years. It was my first experience with the primary/elementary kids. My principal purposefully put me in Grade 4 with the older students in French and Science. The first day in Science I wrote all the instructions on the board with all the outcomes. I thought it would be better if they took the notes down off the board than just handing them a handout. I checked with the language arts teacher to find out whether the kids were handwriting or printing. According to her, they were handwriting. I filled the whole board. I thought we would spend the first block talking about the year's program and writing it down. It took them three to four days to write it down. Their homeroom teacher just sat in the back of the classroom with a knowing smile. Needless to say, I learned a lot in that first week.

On another personal learning occasion, I took the Grade 2s to the library. I was showing them the alphabet and the card index and explaining to them how they could

find books through the index. The idea was that they would draw boxes representing the card catalogue drawers and then put the alphabet letters in the boxes just like they saw them on the drawers. It took an entire block and we didn't get a single square box – not one. Fran just sat quietly in the library watching my lesson die. Apparently drawing a box is a tough job for Grade 2 students. A set of boxes with letters was a little out of their reach.

First Telling (Round 2)
(Responding to an important personal photograph)

. . . experiencing mentorship

The picture that I chose to share is in keeping with some of the stories that I've told about myself. Some of the stories have been sad, about a childhood that was not as perfect as some. This picture is one of my mother and her sister, Muriel. My mother is the grey haired little lady beside Muriel. When this picture was taken, my mother was quite ill with cancer. The picture was taken very close to her death. Her sister Muriel came rushing to her whenever she was not well. Muriel is also the mentor of my life. She is the aunt who was most like my mother. Mom was quite beautiful before she

became ill. Muriel is getting on in years, but she is still quite an attractive woman. I think that Muriel was probably always the way I wished my mother could be. My mom didn't finish school and she had a troubled marriage and life. Muriel went through school and became a teacher. She married an engineer and had two boys who went on to university. It was not all perfect, but it was a whole lot closer to what you might classify as a normal family situation. If you had the opportunity to meet my mom you would really have loved her. She was one of those people that everybody thought was a pretty wonderful person. But Muriel was the mentor. She was a Kindergarten teacher and that's what I wanted to be when I grew up. It was that thought that brought me back to education after I quit school in Grade 9. I didn't ever get to be a Kindergarten teacher. I chose, instead, to teach high school and since then I have also taught elementary and junior high. I think, like junior high, Kindergarten takes some very special people to make it through.

The picture is set beside the Don Valley in Toronto, facing the apartment building my parents were living in at the time. Muriel had come to visit in a red fall coat like my mom's coat. They looked so very like sisters in their red coats. I used to stay with Auntie Muriel in the summers. She couldn't go out anywhere without saying, "Oh, you know, that would be perfect for my classroom." Everywhere she went, she was always picking up ideas, cutting things off the ends of stuff, asking if she could be on the waiting list for the sign or the poster. I used to comment on how she must love her kids and love her teaching. She would always say to me, "Ah yes, but I need these two months in the summer too, because that's what re-energizes me. If I didn't have this time, I don't know if I could continue doing this." She taught all the way to retirement. Unfortunately, I think during the last couple of years before she retired she was quite unhappy as a teacher. It was really sad because she had been so very happy as a teacher for so many years. She is still alive and very much in my life. She is currently doing battle with cancer. She's 79 years old now, living in Quebec, in Montreal and she is fighting the good fight. I can remember when I was a kid, one night Auntie Muriel and Uncle Bob had come to stay with us. We did not have a lot of sleeping accommodations when I was younger, so everyone was farmed out around the house. When I was about 7 or 8 years old the arrangement was that the men slept in one room and the women slept in another room. I remember one time, when I went to wake my mom in the morning for something very urgent, standing at the end of the bed, not knowing which one of them to wake up. I couldn't tell the difference. It's about mentorship I think. Muriel was a rescuer. She rescued my mom all the time and she was very quick to rescue me too. I think that speaks a little bit about the rescuing I do from day to day.

First Telling (Round 3)
(Responding to Dr. Seuss and the newspaper)

. . . experiencing the financial burdens

Last fall I had a call from the Native Liaison Social Worker regarding Ben who attended our life skills class. He wanted an exit report describing the progress Ben had made during his five years in a high school program. The band managers wanted to

know what they had gotten for the money they had invested in education for this mentally and physically disabled young man. As the new Director of Special Education, my first thought was horror that "what did we get for our money" was the question being asked in the first place. The band financial managers were asking, "What did we get for our money? Will we send him back to school any more, or did we get all we could get for our money?" Ben's IQ is very low, probably 30 or 40, and he has behavioural issues as well. It is unlikely that he could function in a work place and so his post secondary placement would probably be at home or in a group home. It is possible that he could work in a sheltered workshop. So the band financial managers were questioning whether it had been worth it to fund Ben for an educational program when he was going to land at home anyway.

Now just last week I was very fortunate, as a trustee, to be able to go to the Lakeland Annual Report Dinner. The governance group who attend this dinner are school trustees, along with representatives from health and children's services. There were presentations on all aspects of the Student Health Initiative Program. At the dinner table I sat beside a native man who is a social worker and we talked over dinner. I described Ben and asked him, retrospectively, what kind of educational plan we should have developed for him. The social worker said, "I don't know, what did the elders say?" I don't know if we asked the elders what we should be planning for this child. I think the answer to that is probably no. As educators, we can sometimes get all wrapped up in reading, writing, arithmetic, and classroom behaviours to the point that we miss the point. Here we have a "special" child (Ben) and we didn't ever ask the very community that was going to be responsible for his living down the road, what they expected of this education system and what they wanted us to be working towards for Ben. So we may well have missed the mark in terms of education for Ben. We may not have done what we could have or should have done for this child to prepare him to be a contributing member of a very different cultural community. Does he know anything about smudging and sweat lodges and all the things that are part of his spiritual background? Maybe he could not understand a lot of things because of his limited cognitive ability, but have we taught him to understand the basics of his own spirituality? Well, maybe that is not our job either, but I'm just saying I thought it was a good question.

Re-Telling as Theming (Round 1)
(Discussing the response to *The Courage to Teach*)

When I look back over my own dialogue, I am amazed at the feelings of inadequacy that I live with regarding my capacity as a teacher. I, like many of my colleagues, am very quick to spot places where improvement needs to take place. The art teacher story places me, a language arts teacher, in an uncomfortable but exciting position where I am able to see a side of student creativity that pleases me. On the other hand, I feel the pressure to perform as an artist, a side of myself that I see as yet undeveloped. It is as though I am a fraud, pretending to be an artist and sometimes pretending to be a teacher. The fear is that somehow I will be found out and that would be a great disappointment to my students, my colleagues, and to myself.

Recognition is very important to me. When my graduated student speaks to me in the restaurant about his memories of me as his teacher, I am not only pleased, but somehow validated as a good teacher. I am quick to see my own shortfalls, as the words on the radio station confirm, and I am hopeful that I make a difference to students as confirmed by the student, now adult, who remembered me.

On the lighter side, I can laugh at myself and my naiveté in the classroom. I have told the story of my Grade 4s writing notes for four days on many occasions. It tickles me that I could have been so stupid. The good news, of course, is that I learned from that mistake and the mistaken notion that Grade 2 children have developed spatial relations equipping them to draw geometics and maturity with words and letters preparing them with the skill to label groupings of letters in a meaningful way. They may not have learned much in those beginning days, but I certainly did. As I look back over those primary school experiences, I remember fondly the seasoned teachers who patiently watched me and allowed me to make the mistakes that were necessary for my own understanding of how primary children learn. It is true that they laughed at my foibles, but they also supported me on my journey as a developing teacher.

Re-Telling as Theming (Round 2)
(Discussing the response to an important personal photograph)

As I review this story of mom and Auntie Muriel, I see myself living between what is, my unhappy and unwell mother, and what might be, my well-educated and "successful" auntie. It is clear that my choice to be a teacher follows the model of the mother I might have had, and the situation I might have lived as a child. Living between the two life situations provides a point of view that knows the negative scenario and so doubly values the more positive scenario. I spent much of my youth wishing that Auntie Muriel was my mother and that I lived in a "normal" household. However, it is possible that the life experience in a less functional environment provided me the inner strength to realize the ambition that was created by the more positive role model. I knew what life would be like if I followed the model of my own mother. I loved her and often tried to help her, but her life choices were out of my sphere of influence. I watched her grow old and tired and unwell and I feared that would be my lot in life as well. Occasionally, mom would share her wished life goals with me and they included music - she was a wonderful singer, and more education - she wanted to be a physical education teacher. Instead, she quit school because of finances I'm told, and went to work at a young age as a clerk. She married young and life unfolded for me, her oldest child, as it did. Auntie Muriel did very well in school and so she was chosen by her family to go on. She took piano lessons because she was the most promising choice of her family. Auntie Muriel went to college and married once she had begun her career as a teacher. I quit school in Grade 9, returned as a mature student, and realized my career goals because of or in spite of the lack of support from my family. It seems that I tried to follow both role models in my life. As a child, being a teacher - like Auntie Muriel, was only a dream. My childhood reality did not venture beyond the situation my parents had created. However, as a thinking young woman who had the privilege of living between two worlds, I saw

opportunity present itself and in the end, a childhood dream became my reality. I am a teacher.

My picture of being a teacher did not really include the children, although I was aware of their role. Instead, my picture was very focused on the attributes of the person who was teacher. I worked towards emulating my Auntie Muriel's characteristics. I saw her as kind, wise, energetic, beautiful, organized and as a leader, mother, wife, and most of all, the successful privileged child of her parents.

Re-Telling as Theming (Round 3)
(Discussing the response to Dr. Seuss and the newspaper)

At first look, Ben's story is about my concern that funding has become more important than people. I remember being absolutely appalled that the band would frame their question about Ben's educational program in financial terms. I was surprised, I must say, and maybe a little naive about the governance of a native band. I had some romantic notions about independence and self-determination that valued history and cultural roots and somehow that translated, for me, as an organization that was above the politics of money.

Another element of Ben's story is my retrospective view that consultation should have taken place when his program was being crafted. It took me a while to get to the question of who should determine his educational plan and shape his future life experience. The educators who planned his program did their best to advance his learning in all of the areas that they could see the need to pursue. Unfortunately, they did not consult with Ben's extended family - the band. In the end, they are caring for Ben daily and his ability to contribute to community may have been hampered by an "educational" focus on his program. The native social worker that chatted with me over dinner shared his story. He was on the street, controlled by drugs and alcohol until he eventually went home to his reserve where he found the spiritual foundations that he had been missing. With a new mindset, he left the reserve a second time to pursue an education that would help him help others. Somehow, I wonder if we sold Ben short.

This story demonstrates the value that I place on listening and watching that a child is treated appropriately. It is no surprise that I think it is important for children to be allowed appropriate treatment. My own story is one of a child who often suffered at the hands of my parents. My passion as a teacher is very much connected to the experiences of a child reaching out beyond the limits of the home.

Re-Telling Meta-Narratively (Round 1)
(Discussing the responses to *The Courage to Teach*)

I represent myself to myself as a passionate teacher. The fear, however, is that I am in fact not as competent as I pretend to be. While I am certainly motivated to provide

an effective and student centred program that is first class, the underlying motivation that keeps me working at teaching is an internal need for recognition, not only from my students, but more importantly from me. If I am not a passionate teacher, then who am I? The title of teacher and all of its privileges is important to my sense of self worth. That sense of self worth is very much connected to the lacking that was created in my childhood experiences. The valuing of recognition as a good and passionate teacher contributes to my need to have control over my life situation. This control was not present in my childhood experiences and this lack of control fathered the need to be in control. I often remember the proverb, "Need is the mother of invention" (Unknown Source). This need of mine to be in control has invented the representation of teacher me.

Re-Telling Meta-Narratively (Round 2)
(Discussing the responses to an important personal photograph)

Privilege is a key signifier in my own story. Through the lacking of voice and privilege in a dysfunctional family situation and the observation that privilege and voice are available under certain circumstances, I seek life situations that will provide privilege to me. A second signifier is recognition. Without recognition, there is no evidence of the value of privilege. This recognition needs to be both internal and external. When a former student recognized that I had been a "good" teacher and provided for his learning and social needs in the classroom that signifies recognition and privileges me among teachers with that student. The educational course that I have followed that allows me to teach recognizes my achievement and privileges me among people as a teacher. The ongoing educational experience that I continue to seek privileges me among the educated. I am given privilege of voice through on going recognition. Ultimately, as I am doing in

this dissertation, I hear my own voice in the work. I am allowed to give privilege and voice to myself in this work.

Re-Telling Meta-Narratively (Round 3)
(Discussing the responses to Dr. Seuss and the newspaper)

Voice is a central signifier of my experience in this story. Ben needed his own voice and if that was not possible then the voices closest to him needed to be heard. Over and over again my own voice was not heard and that left me powerless as a child and even into adulthood. If you are accustomed to having no voice, it is not an easy matter to develop a voice. With a voice, some measure of control over one's destiny is much more likely. A voice is a powerful tool in developing meaningful life experiences. As a teacher, and in this case Director of Student Services, I am in a position to be heard and to help other children be heard. The passion, I believe, comes from recognition that there is meaning to my voice.

My Understanding of Mary

It is a challenge to elaborate my own tellings because there is, of course, much more depth of personal knowledge to the rich history that brings me to this point. At the same time, it is sometimes, to borrow an old cliché, difficult to see the forest for the trees. Key signifiers in my stories are recognition and voice. These are elements that I value greatly because of the lacking in my own childhood scenario. Failing to enjoy positive role models within my immediate family, I sought the model that held out a hand to my situation. My Auntie Muriel was a teacher, a kind and caring person, respected by all who knew her and deeply loved by me. In the entire world, there was no one I would rather have been like. She was recognized as the matriarch of my extended family and

her voice was well heard, even by my own father, who rarely heard anyone but himself, and certainly not me.

As a reader participant of this work, it is important to remember that my retellings are told from a point of view. That framework has created boundaries for me as a researcher and contributed to the development of a discourse of my representation of self to self. Lacking created the need for me to represent myself as someone worthy of recognition and voice. I like to think that, in turn, the representation contributes daily to the lives of children in my care. They give me voice and I give them dedicated and caring service. There is a tidy balance in the picture of giving and taking that offers harmony to my life.

It is from this lacking perspective that I view others. When I hear the stories that others have to tell, I am struck by the needs that their apparent lacking have created.

Chapter 13: A Theoretical Framework for Listening at Work

We see ourselves and project that self within the
context of what is right and acceptable. (Mary)

I have shared some significant dialogue and my understandings of these conversations and discourses, which leaves us with the questions, "where are we?," "how did we get here?," and "what does it all mean?" The theoretical framework that was developed at the outset is the path that I use to make sense of the discourses.

Subjectivity

There is no question that the understanding that I bring to the reader of the stories in this work is subjective. The observation that my perspective, point of view, comes from a place of lacking is an important aspect of experiencing and knowing the participants. It is through my subjectivity that I watch their subjectivity and through yours as the reader that an even richer knowledge of the passion in teaching takes place. If we look at any one of the participants' dialogue, we will see them offer their own subjective tellings. They are subject to the stimulation, context of the meeting, history of their own memories, and politics of representation.

Cheryl subjectively represents herself as a leader in softball in her first telling. In her second telling, she subjectively connects her softball philosophy to the workplace, where she elaborates her place in the role of leadership. She sees herself as a leader as long as she is not burdened with unpopular direction that would alienate the team from her. She sees herself as part of the team, with a leadership option. In the third telling, I see her as the team player who lacks the will to challenge the rest of the team for the sake of leadership. Each subjective view falls short of a true understanding, yet each overlapping one another provides a picture of a passionate teacher who struggles with the

politics of each day, the internal politics of representation, and the external politics of power. These are the "inter" or "multi" subjective perspectives that Jean Clandinin (1988) speaks of that lend some measure of objectivity to the understandings (p. 269).

The Politics of Representation

Trinh T. Minh-ha (1992) points out that politics and power are a large part of the concept of representation (p. 141). The teachers in this study represented themselves as people who put children first and for whom the need to teach is based on a desire to help children and to make a difference. Clandinin and Connelly (1990, p. 10) might say their descriptions of special moments that reflect that desire contain "narrative secrets", often seen as a dishonest view of self, projected in order to cause a politically positive representation of who we are. To some extent, that is true. We see ourselves and project that self within the context of what is right and acceptable. If asked in an interview about my motivation to be a teacher, it is unlikely, though true, that I would say that the lack of control, the lack of opportunity, the lack of modeling in my life has given me a need to be in control and to find opportunities to be who I think I should be and that I am compelled to be "successful" whether children are involved or not. And further, that my compassion for children's life situations is built on my own need for compassion towards me. It is not acceptable for an interviewee to focus on self and yet we as administrators continue to interview as though we are learning something about the person we are interviewing.

Jo, for example, speaks at length about being the protector of children. She talks at length in both first and second tellings about the emotional connection she feels towards children. It isn't until the second retelling when Jo looks into the causes of her connection to children that she delves into the possibility that there is a reason for her

representation of self as the protector. Jo's mother died when she was in her early teens and it certainly could be speculated that she felt the loss of the protection that a mother provides. Jo's philosophical development is a product of both her need to be protected and her representation of self as the protector. The teacher/protector cover story is not so much fiction as it is an outcome of the underlying vulnerable self. Again, it would not serve Jo well to present herself in an interview as being vulnerable and needy, so the representation becomes the cover that allows her to be seen as a desirable teacher in the climate of power and politics. It is, however, her vulnerability and her ability to be both child and teacher that makes her the passionate teacher that she is.

A Post Modern Process of Construction, Destruction, and Reconstruction

Within the post-modern framework, each participant constructed himself or herself for us in response to stimulation to memory and conversation. Each one deconstructed their representation of self through a retelling that culminated in a reconstruction. Finally, I sought the connections of one dialogue to the next and one reconstruction to the next. In doing so, I found themes that repeated or reinforced each other. The belief that underlies this process is that if something is deconstructed often enough, pillars of the representation remain, while less important detail falls away. The pillars, when reconstructed, form the key signifiers that reveal a deeper understanding of who the participant is, how that might have come about, and what it might take to retain the reconstruction as a whole.

Patrick, for example, represents himself in a variety of ways. One of his representations in the first telling is the misunderstood youth who seeks respect as a teacher and an opportunity to provide the "fair shake" that students need. In his second

telling, there are numerous signifiers and an important one that remains as he reconstructs the first thinking is evident in the statement, "I was the child" who was misunderstood and in need of understanding. When he describes the children who are misunderstood as intuitive in knowing who is sincere in their attempts to help them, he describes himself as both needy child and helpful adult. The father/child role is constructed and deconstructed by him in this way, revealing him as the child seeking the role as a good father in order to help "them" and himself who are one and the same.

In this way, the post-modern concepts of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction help us to focus on the pillars that remain even in the chaos of the deconstruction and reconstruction process. Of course, the danger that Peter Taubman (1999) would point out to us is the enframing that exists in the selection of criteria for reconstruction. It is likely that it is Patrick's conscious and subconscious understanding of societal expectations that causes him to reconstruct himself in the ways that he does. However, the repetition taken from his first to his second tellings and prompted by different stimulus provides us with some understanding of what is important to him. It is important that he be treated fairly and that he subsequently treats others fairly. It is important to him that he be worthy of respect and that he is able to provide for his children and his students the care they deserve and need.

Point of View

Each participant brings a point of view that directs our understanding of them. Cheryl's point of view, for example, comes from the perspective of a daughter, a parent, a teacher, a community member, and most prevalent in her dialogue, a soft ball team member. Cheryl the person and Cheryl the softball player are concurrent concepts that

are dragged to the present through a choice of photograph that represents her as she wishes to be seen. This point of view presents signifiers such as the "team," that Walkerdine (1986) refers to as "a dynamic intersection of viewers and viewed, a chain of signification in which a new sign is produced" (p. 168). The team now presents signifiers that can be carried from the team moment, through the photograph to the present school day. What we see is a teacher who trains hard, looks for guidance from her coach, for support from her team, performs well, and seeks the opportunity to be seeded in a higher and respected order. The lens of the game is transplanted to the field of the teaching environment and perhaps to the boundaries of living for Cheryl.

Memory

With each moment of our lives, we are called upon to assemble representations of ourselves to meet the contexts we encounter. As soon as that moment passes it becomes historical memory and it is filed away for later use as it is needed. When we call the memory forward, we reconstruct it to meet the representational need of the new moment. Like the photograph, the memory is based on a truth that once existed, and it is elaborated from then to now along with an ever growing collection of understandings. When Laura remembers her student, Freddy Wright, from Grade 4 who wrote to her in the summer with thanks for her support, she remembers the letter and the climate of that time. She remembers Freddy's relationship with the girls and she also remembers her own relationship with her male and female students at the time. These thoughts are accompanied by her remembered experiences as a child and student – a child and student who spent considerable time convincing her father that she was worthy as an intellectual and as a person. Her own school experience of being the only girl with a group of boys at

the science competition enhances her need to treat Freddy fairly. Laura's choices of memories - Freddy, her relationship with her Father, her experiences as a female student in a male science environment, are what Connelly (as sited in Ben-Peretz, 1995) calls "elaborate, emotionally laden, intentional constructions" (p. xvii) that reveal signifiers of Laura's self in relation to others. It is the overlapping subjective revelations of Laura's memories that create an objective sense that her worthiness is connected to her intellectual relevance in her male dominated world.

Process

The process involves layering theoretical frameworks in a manner that creates deep understanding of self. Narrative memory overlaid by the concepts of power, discourses, boundaries, conscious and subconscious thought, repression, language, and the unsaid, applied to both the narrative and the reader's self, creates understanding. Frank was a difficult participant to understand. He is a private person, and he was reluctant to share personal information. He kept his story telling very close to the classroom, with the exception of a trip that he and his wife took together. Therefore, it was critical that I go back to the theoretical framework in order to find a way to construct some understanding of who Frank is and why he is like that. What I found was a discourse of "I" and "you" that gave depth to his dialogue. For the most part, Frank spoke in simple sentences with the subject often beginning "I like . . . I have . . . I think . . . I listen . . . I will . . . I believe." He switched to the pronoun "you" on a number of occasions, "You just can't measure . . . , when you play one of the top thirty . . . , you have to be fit . . . , you can't smoke . . . , you can't do drugs . . . , you have to be tenacious

. . . , you can't give up . . . , you could be an accountant or a lawyer . . . , you can't overindulge . . ., and you will burn out . . . "

What Frank did not share is family dynamics. What he did share through language is that he uses metacognition to instruct himself. The "you" statements that he uses are instructions that follow his "I" belief statements. The boundaries that he uses to instruct himself are those found in sports. Like Cheryl, Frank defines life rules by the "game." In his case, the game is soccer and the "relationships" that he explains are those of his game partners – soccer friends and those he instructs, his wife and his students. The power structure he engages in is supportive to those he instructs. However, his power comes from the confidence that he has the field knowledge and experience to give instruction. One of the places he felt insecure was teaching junior high students "yet." The power structure did not work for him at that age level. The process of working through the layers of theoretical framework – memory, language, discourse, and boundaries, provided good understanding of who Frank is in the absence of knowledge about his family relationships. The family relationships themselves are understood through his own role description of the instructor of his wife and students. It could be speculated that his role in the family is located similarly. Perhaps his father instructed his wife and family within the boundaries of his self concept at another time and in another place.

Signifiers

Personal signifiers are discovered through the construction and deconstruction of circumstances and self. As discussed in the "post-modern perspective" key signifiers are the pillars that remain standing once the context has been extracted and the facts left to

drift in the space between the contexts. Key signifiers or master signifiers emerge through repetition found throughout the theoretical concepts. Jo deconstructs some self-concepts in her tellings and retellings and I add to them. At one point, she speaks of her disconnection to the word passion and her preference for the word compassion. She thought that compassion better described the emotions she felt towards her students. Yet later on in her own dialogue she speaks of passionately defending the rights of children to be respected. According to Mackey (1983) there are no accidents of word (signifier) choice (p. 263). Therefore, in my retelling, I connect her references to compassion and passion as a narrator observer of her stories. By questioning the use of passion or compassion, a reflection is called for that causes a construction. Jo's tearful observation about the importance she places on defending children is followed by an "ahah." "I wonder if my mother's death when I was 18 caused me to go in a certain direction?" She then proceeds to construct the thinking around the career path she chose that ended in a supportive role to children. Interconnection is a signifier that Jo identifies in her own deconstruction and construction process. As the observer narrator, I take that to mean connection from mother to self as child and from self as child to protector of children. Jo is the child in need of protection and she is the protector of the children in need. The self-identified signifier "stand(s) in for the meaning" (Mackey, 1983, p. 258).

Discourse

In the three discourses, the participants first represent themselves (Hall, 1997, p. 49), then they allow themselves to drift among the fragments of the constructed self (Kerby, 1991, p. 4) and finally, I provide a third discourse to aid the reader in seeking the deconstruction and reconstruction of the known (Hall, p. 225). In my own first telling, I

speak of a teacher struggling to be effective. I recognize that I have shortcomings and inadequacies as an art teacher without the technical background to rely on. The discourse is one of feelings of inadequacy and self doubt as a teacher wishing to be seen as passionate. In the second telling, I move from teacher me to the feelings associated with the doubts expressed in the first telling. I observe that I sometimes feel like I am pretending to be a teacher rather than actually being one. However, I know that I must learn from my mistakes and find the ability to laugh at myself as well. In the third telling, I look between teacher me and my feelings of fear and inadequacy and focus on the need for recognition that pushes me to continue teaching. The space between the binary, passionate teacher and inadequate teacher is filled with reasons. The reasons that I might not see myself as adequate and worthy of recognition and the privilege of voice can be linked to the child me, who lacked the same. The big sister in the photograph of the three girls on page 29 appears to be well adjusted and able to provide support to her little sisters. Nothing could be further from the truth. I failed, as a child, to overcome inadequacy and self doubt and I failed to save my two younger sisters from the same fate. This is the teacher who worries about being adequate enough to support her students. The space between passionate and adequate teaching is filled with regret for me. On the bright side, I work very hard to provide support to students in my care. The three discourses based on *The Courage to Teach*, moved from teacher me, to the person me, to the reasons behind me.

Boundaries

Of course, there are many boundaries that all of the participants, perhaps all teachers, contend with. However, this work attempts to focus on the inner person represented in the text of their stories. Each of the participants in this research talked about the defining boundaries they are confined to, or within which they have chose to live (Lacan, 1998, p. 105). Frank and Cheryl erected the self imposed boundaries of the game with all the rules of the game applied to their daily living and teaching. Patrick finds himself enframed by the boundaries of fatherhood, a place he explores with each episode of his life. Jo tests the boundaries of childhood as self and for her students. She seeks, within these shared boundaries, empowerment and voice. Laura, the most senior participant, lived the confinement of an imposed and subordinate boundary of womanhood and she continues to fight the definition that limits her "self." My own boundaries are the limits that my childhood has erected and that I continue to work within and around. Jane wrestles with the boundaries of power. Politically and interpersonally, Jane chooses whether to live within a power framework or to create her own power structures for self and for others. Watching Jane navigate power structures is part of the application of this theoretical framework. Jane likes to be in charge. Even as a child, she speaks of taking the leadership role. At the time that role was represented in the "play" teacher. Even in Jane's personal relationships, she is a "powerful" partner. On the one hand she playfully enjoys the social aspects of her collegial relationships. On the other hand, she is quick to terminate a relationship that does not fit with her thinking. For example, Jane is not interested in a friendly relationship with negative people who could impact her positive attitude. Jane is quick to fight the power structures of politics and

curriculum. She explains the reason for this powerful approach to be the desire to focus on the needs of her children. As a professional, she is vigilant for opportunities to secure public respect for her chosen profession as a teacher. The episode with another student psychologist who could not handle a difficult child in the testing situation shows her pride in her power to control a situation. It is the "metonymic space" between power and "not" power that holds the key to knowing Jane (Aoki, 1996, p. 3). It is her struggle to maintain power in the politics of education and relationships not only for herself, but also for her students that speaks to Jane the passionate teacher.

Political Power

Observing where the power lies gives us good information about who the participant is and why he or she is like that. As already observed, Jane is bound by power – a desire to be in control and a desire to empower others. She chose a profession that offers opportunity for control in the planning and execution of lessons for children who look to her for leadership. At the same time, she struggles with the control that is exerted over her by curriculum and local (parent, community, and collegial) politics. "Whom does the discourse serve?" It serves both Jane and her students by providing opportunity for voice. Where is the source of the desire for control? It rests in the parent child relationship that we are unaware of. It could be that Jane's family modeled power in a positive way through leadership and empowerment of her. It could be that she lacked the power as a child and now feels the need for it. However, Jane did not share that kind of information in her conversations and we are left to speculate whether Jane is following a role model or satisfying a lacking.

Fiction and Non-Fiction

Autobiographical narratives, according to Kadar (1992, p. 5) and Edel (1989, p. 17) are by nature fiction. In addition, memory presents with the trappings of time, culture, and the politics of representation. However, with the process of deconstruction in addressing the post modern questions "What is it like?," "Why is it like that?," and "How else could it be?" the fiction, the subjectivity points to the pillars of signifiers that evidence significant understanding. Jo is a sensitive woman who presents as a child-centred teacher who passionately defends the rights of children to be respected and heard. This is a truth. She is also a person in need of support and a child in need of protection herself. This is also a truth. Jo is emotionally connected to others – children, family, and friends. This is another truth. In sketching her character, the point of view of the author, the lens of the camera, determines which truth appears before the audience. She could be characterized, as I have suggested in the past, as being passionate as a teacher because of her need to make right her personal lived experience. In rescuing other children she rescues herself. It would also be appropriate to characterize her as a caring person who philosophically embraces "compassion" for self and others as a way of life. It is the politics of the sharing opportunity that dictates how the character is described. As I have mentioned, Jo would not present herself in a job interview as having personal needs to satisfy as a teacher. It is more likely she would discuss at length her philosophical compassionate perspective. The overlapping fictions, subjectivities, deconstructions, and reconstructions reinforce both pictures of Jo, and the audience decides where the "truth" lives.

Subconscious

The subconscious is the force that holds the stories and the fragments of deconstructed pieces together. It is the reason that a particular memory is pulled forward from and to a context. The subconscious represents the sum total of our thought from conception to now. It doesn't enframe so much as it connects history and thought. Within the subconscious is a rich world of desire and fantasy that encourages the connection of signifiers in search of power (Walkerdine,1986). Patrick tells stories of his encounters with students and he values the recognition he receives as a caring teacher. He tells other stories about his relationship with his children. He chose a career path that he believed would accord him respect in his community. He also tells stories about himself as a child and, with a picture of his mother in his hand, he speaks of the passing of his father. The connecting force in these stories is his subconscious lacking of the father in his life that causes him to continually seek having and being a father. These different stories connect for a reason. For Patrick the power is in the position. He thought teaching was the position. Teaching afforded him the opportunity to father.

Chapter 14: The Significance of the Study

I understand that another's happiness may be my
best interest. (MacPherson, 1996, p. 461)

Experiencing Knowing

The value of the study, the stories shared by each participant, and our subsequent retellings, is the collecting of knowings and understandings that shape the growing knowledge of the reader. This collaborative knowledge is not only transferred, but also continually blended from the tellings, to the reading and to the doing of all who engage in the stories. Connelly and Clandinin cite Guba and Lincoln (1990) that generalization should be given up for transferability. And according to Van Maanen (in Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) "reliability and validity are overrated criteria whereas apparency and verisimilitude are underrated criteria" (p. 7). The participant narratives and my own create a picture of the past, present and future of passionate teachers. From these pictures, fictional or non fictional, we glean insight into the participants' fantasies and desires. As a school administrator, my interest is in finding and keeping passionate teachers/teaching. As a teacher, my interest is in knowing how my own passion for teaching is created and kept. In learning about the participant passionate teachers' ways of becoming and being passionate teachers, we might reflect on the means of nurturing their potentially fragile state of being. As each reader shares in the experiences of these passionate teachers, it is possible that the blended knowings may contribute in some small way to the enabling reflection of a teacher, or an administrator.

The Sources of Passionate Teaching

It is tempting to make "concluding" statements that border on "generalization," bringing to an end the dialogue among participants, myself and you, the reader. The leap

to findings leads us back to a scientific approach that provides answers to questions and is summative in nature. This work, however, is formative by nature with the intent of discovering understanding of the location and nurturing of passion in teaching through being with the dialogue as a listener as well as a participant.

As I see these participants, and I include myself, there are two key understandings that contribute to the development of these passionate teachers. First, the child within and the "other" child in the classroom are connected and this connection is somehow generated by the need of one for the other. Second, need or desire is created out of a lacking that exists in the development of the inner child through experiencing life. These understandings take us back to our understanding of the relationship between passion and compassion.

Each participant describes passion as an opportunity to be compassionate and in doing so they speak of being enabled to work towards their best interest. As it turns out, their best interest is to be compassionate with their students and colleagues. Their needs to father, or to be seen as an intellectual, or to be in control, to nurture or to find order are all met through compassionate interactions with their students. This path is chosen through their subconscious understanding of the forces that drive them. There is no philosophical connection among them, yet there is commonality in their need. Sonia MacPherson (1996) describes the connection between acting for self interest and compassion when she says:

> Introducing compassion as an overriding ethic in the adult world of the classroom, office or any environment is really quite a radical proposal. It calls for courage, and a willingness to cross the socially defined boundaries of what is generally considered to be *one's business*. If every *other* salient being becomes my business, as much or more than *I* am my business, then I transform the public world into something personal. It does not mean that I help others at the expense

> of my own long term happiness; such a tactic would not work in the end for I would become bitter, thereby constraining my ability to bring joy and pleasure into the lives of others. Compassion is full attention with interest, in which *I understand that another's happiness may be my best interest.* (p. 461)

It is here that the space between Eastern and Western philosophical thinking touch. Lacanian (1998) Western thinking identifies lacking that creates a space, a need to be filled that we call desire and Eastern thinking asks us to empty our too full space to allow for desired compassion. The participants in this study qualify under Western terms, yet they find that compassion fills the need, that empty space. Their passion pushes desire in the direction of compassion. In searching for the "who" and "how" of the passionate teacher, the inevitable discussion becomes the relationship of self and other. Certainly this research connects the child self to the child in the classroom as "other." It is this relationship that flourishes, languishes or is poisoned by the teacher "self" that leads. According to David Smith (1999), the very nature of this research assumes the focus on self and other is self-serving. Even though I make the comparison of Western and Eastern thinking and the observation that they come together at a place called compassion, there is no mistaking the different roads we travel to reach compassion. This work and the assumptions within are based on subjective thinking, albeit inter-subjective or multi-subjective and a focus is on self and other. David Smith (1999) speaks of the search for identity in his essay "Identity, Self and Other in the Conduct of Pedagogical Action: An East/West Inquiry". He says,

> The narrative self is a kind of story-telling ego who identifies him or herself as the centre around which is constellated series of Others who provide the necessary conditions out of which the drama of the Self can be revealed. There is an inextricability of Self and Other, with the Other maintained as a kind of Other-for-the-self. (p. 16)

As the stories of the participants in this work unfold, it is clear that self and other are not two separate entities. There is, in fact, a connection between them that offers more than a self serving "autobiography in which inevitably I am the hero" (Smith, 1999, p. 16). Instead, the narratives describe the development of relationship of self and other that takes the concept of self inside that of the "other." Combined through experiencing relationship, persons "exist inseparably from those experiences" (Smith, p.15). For the passionate teacher participants in this study, passion becomes compassion and according to MacPherson (1996), helps to relieve them of the burden of anger, hatred, competition, power and greed, the "sole sources of human suffering." There exists a symbiotic relationship between the children "other" who are treated compassionately and the need that describes "self," the passionate teacher.

To each of the participants, recognition and voice are important signifiers. Recognition, although important, is most relevant when it comes from the students they serve and from within. The many stories of chance encounters with students after they shared a classroom are evidence of the need that is met within teachers by a few words of recognition. Voice is also important. The classroom provides an opportunity where privilege is given to the voice of a teacher. Voice and recognition are examples of the need within being met.

I believe the passionate/compassionate teacher originates in the desire to meet his or her own underlying needs within the framework of opportunity found in the teaching/learning community. Their longevity can be accredited to the recognition from others and self that is enabled in this environment. Patrick finds an opportunity to father and to experience fathering in the classroom and his students provide him with

recognition of his performance as a father figure. Cheryl lives within a safe social framework in schools that affords her a position with voice and an opportunity to be recognized as a leader. Her colleagues and students celebrate the leadership place with her. The intellectual community of schools allowed Laura to grow and develop as an intellectual herself and to engage her students in the same intellectual pursuits. Her students and her husband recognize her as an intellectual, an artist, a musician, and more. Jane has a good deal of control over her work and relationships in the school environment. Her professional knowledge and skill are recognized by her peers and she enjoys a voice in shaping the school's programming for students. The power of knowledge rests with Frank as the educational leader in the classroom. He is able to use this power as Jane does to enable his students and they appreciate him for doing so. Jo experiences the support and protect role with her students in the school. They, in turn, rely on her to provide direction and security. I am given voice and recognition in schools as a teacher and administrator.

Why, then, does the passion not exist for some teachers? There are a myriad of obstacles that could stand in the way of the passion in teaching. Certainly basic competence in the knowledge, skills, and attributes of teaching can contribute to disillusionment along with evaluations that do little to reinforce much needed recognition of a job well done. But, more than that, the very framework that enables passionate teaching can contribute to "not" passionate/compassionate teaching. When I think back to Ben, the marginal teacher from the beginning of this work, I remember that he was once, I believe, a passionate teacher. I don't know if he brought "lacking" with him to teaching. However, the desire that drove his passion could not have been met by the

teaching scenario. Passion pushed Ben's desire inward and created an unhappy man who failed to find happiness within the framework he created for himself in the world of education. His need fell within the realm of human suffering. It could be said that his greed for recognition from an unsympathetic other was denied when he failed to gain privilege from an audience beyond the classroom. He sought sources of recognition other than the representation of the celebrated passionate teacher. If, for example, he did not value the kind of power that a classroom teacher has access to, then his need for power would not be satisfied. If that need was not satisfied, then the force that drives desire would not have worked in favour of producing passionate teaching. The power sought needs to match the power found. Ben brought a personal framework, a discourse within boundaries, that was not consistent with the classroom environment. He did not formally participate in the conversations of this research, but he did dialogue with me over time regarding his perceptions about the school as a workplace. He saw his role as a mentor for certain students. He did not view special education students, for example, as being worthy of his attention. He viewed educators as participants in a hierarchy. At the top were physical education teachers and coaches along with teachers of high academic students. He valued for himself a leadership role among these teachers of perceived privilege. Further, Ben was proud of his abilities as a professional musician and worked outside of the school as such. He has been marginally successful in this field. However, in spite of his efforts, Ben has not been able to find a long term or meaningful position as a professional musician. He sees himself as a musician and an intellectual and his "frame of reference" is built on having a voice where he is not heard - in the world of music. Schools with students at all different levels of academic, sports, and social abilities did

not meet the need that Ben brought to the classroom. Accordingly, Ben became increasingly frustrated with the teaching task and with the students and teachers who did not honour his need to represent himself as a privileged member of the intellectual hierarchy.

Experiencing Concluding

Preparation for researching and writing a dissertation is a profound life experience. I have spent the last five years or so reading and then writing about what I read. I have sought out a topic that I believe to be important and rich in possibilities for me and for others who might read it. I have struggled with structures for writing and thinking and struggled again from the lack of structure. Over time I have met, interviewed, and shared, with six passionate teachers, their experiences and mine. I have come to understand much about who they are and who I am. The final challenge is to explain what I have learned from reading, writing, and from experiencing them and me.

I have learned that consciousness and the subconscious flow within and between the domains of past, present, and future. They rest from time to time in familiar places and drag with them important remembrances. The framework that shapes the value of each remembrance is written in the social philosophy of the present for each of us, starting with the original present at the beginning of each life. The foundation of my beginning is apparent in the Freudian principles that shaped modern Western thinking – principles of lacking.

At the same time, the word chosen to describe the kind of teacher that I wanted to learn more about is "passion," a word inextricably connected to "compassion." The language calls forward, not only a modern Western philosophical framework, but also

Eastern thinking. Compassion is a word referenced frequently in Buddhist thought. And so, I learned that the behaviour these "passionate" teachers engaged in was also compassionate. This behaviour, although potentially founded in Western philosophical beginnings, is not bound within that framework, but free to find its own order.

Order is a central signifier for all of the participants and for me. I would not suggest that this is true of all teachers, but it plays a significant role for those who participated in this research. The stories told provided layers of evidence of a structure that each of us constructed for our lives. Our relationships with students, colleagues, family, and others seem to need the boundaries of an order. Each of us chose a role within boundaries. The parent, the coach, the mentor, all fashioned a world of family, team, leadership, and interrelationships.

Representations of ourselves grow over time through experiences and the connections of our conscious and subconscious thoughtful wanderings to those experiences. Throughout life, we are asked to define and redefine ourselves. Each time we define ourselves, we erect boundaries for better or for worse. Once significant boundaries have been established, we seek a place in the world that will fill the needs that the boundaries predict. The boundaries lead each one of us to the field of education. If the match of what education gives and what the boundaries require is rich, then passionate teaching becomes a possibility. A mismatch of give and take, however, could lead to an unhappy partnership and "not passionate" teaching.

The participants in this work were chosen for their representation as passionate teachers. From each I learned that speaking of what we give is easy and speaking of what we need is harder. It is, to some, even offensive to consider that what we do as teachers

might be done to fill a personal need. That made it difficult to understand what needs these passionate teachers might bring to the classroom. At the same time, they expressed appreciation for the times that students and parents recognized their efforts. Yet, they did not necessarily see that recognition was a piece of their desire. Each of the participants' needs was based on their development from childhood to adulthood and on the boundaries they set for themselves.

I spoke at some length in the work about the life experiences that led me to consider myself to be "lacking." I, too, found it difficult to contemplate not what I do for children, but what children do for me. What I found is that children are a desirable part of my life, yet my need does not necessarily require children to be met. My ongoing desire to prove to my father that I am of value and that my voice is strong and meaningful could be met through other endeavours. However, the child me, who was so needy, enjoys the company of the children who walk through my life. My support to their voices seems to give me the voice I desire. Passion is the energy, born of lived experiences, both pleasurable and painful, that fuels desire.

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Sincerely,

Mary McGregor

_____

I,_____agree to participate in this research study under the above named conditions.

Date at _____, this _____day of _____, 2000.

_____
Research Participant

Appendix B: Sample Newspaper Articles

Edmonton Journal · Sept 21, 2000

Principal guilty in rights case

DON THOMAS
Journal Staff Writer
CAMROSE

A Camrose high school principal discriminated against a parent by rebuking him for speaking Spanish during a meeting, says the Alberta Human Rights Commission. Battle River School Dis-

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A step toward two-tier education

I believe the government is making a serious mistake by cutting the education levy on property owners because it will definitely lead to a two-tier system of public education. (*Journal*, Sept.

levies to pay for public educatio
How often have you heard son
one say, "I don't want to pay pro
erty taxes to finance public ed
cation because I don't have a
children, or I don't have childr
in school anymore?"

We live in a democratic socie
where we all pay, whether we u
them or not, for certain servic
Even though I have never us
the services of the RCMP, I s
pay for that service becaus

Alberta schools getting wired

Wed. Nov 3, 2000

by Terry Smith

The province, with a reputation fc
wired jurisdictions in North Ameri
even more savvy over the next three

Minister of Innovation and S
announced Friday the province is sp
provide the infrastructure for high-sp
access to 420 Alberta communities.

With the creation of Alberta Sc
hospital, library and government fac
have access to the same service.

For rural schools like Alexis elen
west of Onoway, cable access hasn't

Wilf Kolb, principal of the con
population of 250, says he's excited.

"We looked into cable Internet,
networks here," says Alexis principal

The school has 10 computers wi
are on a satellite dish supplied by
initiative and eight are hooked to phc

Edmonton Journal · Sept 30(2

Province to reduce class sizes

New study shows students do better

"In terms of having an impact on young learners

Students revel in Olympic spirit

Sept 21 '00

EDWARD PARSONS, THE JOURNAL
National scholars, back row, Ashley Durec, Richard Van Weelden and Patricia Taylor, and, in front, Andrew Sloboda.

Teens earn national scholastic honours

BOB GILMOUR
Journal Staff Writer
EDMONTON

When not studying, or hanging out with friends:
He bags groceries at Safeway in

9-5399 ...ity@thejournal.southam.ca EDMONTON JOURNAL Oct 4, 2000 WE

Report clears teachers in student's drowning